TAKE 20% OFF ALL HOUSE PLANS IN THIS ISSUE, SEE PAGE 119

EYE CANDY
TILE BESTOWS VISUAL APPEAL
See page 58

Builder

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS

APRIL 2009

hanley wood



FIELD REPORT
BRAVE NEW WORLD
Builders venture out in new directions

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The Builder LivingHome is a sustainable show home unveiled at the 2009 IBS Show.

Builder livinghome
2009 SHOWHOME AT IBS
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New Windows From Andersen Windows Are Easy To Use, Easy To Live With



When it comes to windows, it's critical to understand what's important for both the builder and the homeowner. Is it style? Ease of use? Durability? Cost? Environmental responsibility? There are a hundred reasons to like Andersen's new 100 Series windows; the first Andersen® windows specifically designed for homes in the West.

Helping Homeowners Be Environmentally Responsible

The 100 Series product line is environmentally responsible; recycled content is an important aspect to the construction of 100 Series products.

The overall amount of recycled content is certified by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS). It ranges from a minimum of 18 percent to 24 percent pre-consumer recycled glass and wood fiber content based on the National Fenestration Rating Council-rated standard window size in single-hung, casement, awning, picture and gliding window styles and varies by product line.

Andersen achieves this in part by manufacturing 100 Series windows from the company's patented Fibrex® material. Fibrex material is a structural composite that blends the best attributes of polymer and wood fiber. Independent testing has found that Fibrex material has a low thermal expansion and contraction rate, is resistant to rotting and termites, and retains its rigidity and stability in high temperatures.*

Making Life More Comfortable

Andersen 100 Series products also have received SCS Indoor Advantage Gold™ certification** for indoor air quality. This level of certification conforms to the California 01350 standard, recognized as among the strictest in the U.S.

There are also 48 glass options including Andersen SmartSun™ Low-E glass, standard Low-E glass, dual-pane and specialty glass. Andersen SmartSun glass helps reduce heat transfer and energy costs, yet allows sunlight to stream through





while blocking 95 percent of damaging ultraviolet rays which can cause fading.

A Window Made For The West

Andersen® 100 Series windows feature a clean, contemporary design, consistent with many architectural styles found in the West. The windows are available in single-hung, gliding, casement, awning and specialty fixed styles in more than 1,200 sizes and can be specified in more than 20,000 combinations.

There are four exterior color options available: White, Sandtone, Terratone®, and Cocoa Bean. All have matte finishes and white interiors. Finelight™ grilles-between-the-glass are available with a sculpted profile and duplex color capability, so the interior and exterior colors of the window can match those of the home.

When using 100 Series windows, builders and architects can earn LEED points in the Energy & Atmosphere category, Materials & Resources category, and Indoor Environmental Quality category. Andersen 100 Series windows meet ENERGY STAR® qualifications in all climate zones.

Easy To Use

From the factory to the job site, the 100 Series windows are easy to use. The innovative packaging design helps protect the windows throughout the shipping and handling of the products. And, with an integral nailing flange, and multiple frame options, installation time is cut to a minimum.

*See the limited warranty for details.

**SCS-IAQ-01638 & SCS-IAQ-01639

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Builder

VOLUME 32 ISSUE 4 APRIL 2009





FEATURES

Volume 32, number 4. Builder (ISSN 0744-1193; USPS 370-600) is published 12 times per year: monthly in Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. by Hanley Wood, LLC, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005, for the National Association of Home Builders and printed in the USA. Opinions expressed are those of the authors or persons quoted and not necessarily those of the NAHB. Reproduction in whole or in part prohibited without written authorization. Single-copy price: $8.00 (except House Plans issues, which are $12.95). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Builder, P.O. Box 3532, Northbrook, IL 60065-3532. Member: Business Publications Audit, American Business Media.

DEPARTMENTS

ON THE COVER: THE BUILDER LIVINGHOME SHOW HOME INCORPORATES PREFABRICATION AND PANELIZATION SYSTEMS TO OFFER A WINDOW INTO HOUSING'S FUTURE.

COVER PHOTO: JAMES F. WILSON









WHAT'S NEW ON: WWW.BUILDERONLINE.COM

Builder Online

Virtual Reality

The BUILDER LivingHome show home (covered in this month's feature "Survival of the Fittest," page 86), a case study in prefabrication and panelization, offers a look at what housing could and should be: efficient, affordable, and, of course, design savvy. Our coverage of this landmark project extends beyond the magazine's pages with a step-by-step walkthrough of the home's various stages of construction and assembly, project team info, press conference videos, blog posts, a webinar, a virtual tour, and more, all available at www.builderlivinghome.com.

Presidential Seminar 2009

There's still time to catch several of the live webinars that make up this year's Presidential Seminar, offered online and for free. Don't miss expert advice on sales and marketing tactics for the current housing market (April 8), paring down operations to be as efficient as possible (April 15), and finding financing (April 22). Attendees will also have the opportunity to get their questions answered by the experts. And if you're unable to catch the webinars as they're happening or if you missed any of the March sessions, you can still watch them with their accompanying Q&As later. For schedules and information as well as to register for a webinar and view past webinars, simply log onto www.builderonline.com/presidentialseminar.

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Canada Publications #40612608. Canadian return address: BleuChip International, P.O. Box 25542, London, ON N6C 6B2
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Builder, P.O. Box 3532, Northbrook, IL 60065-3532
Builder will occasionally write about companies in which its parent organization, Hanley Wood, LLC, has an investment interest. When it does, the magazine will fully disclose that relationship.

Volume 32, number 4. Builder (ISSN 0744-1193; USPS 370-600) is published 12 times per year: monthly in Jan., Feb., March, April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., and Dec. by Hanley Wood, LLC, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005, for the National Association of Home Builders and printed in the USA. Copyright 2009 by Hanley Wood, LLC. Opinions expressed are those of the authors or persons quoted and not necessarily those of the NAHB. Reproduction in whole or in part prohibited without written authorization. Single-copy price: $8 (except House Plans issues, which are $12.95). NAHB members receive one subscription at a rate of $15 per year taken from membership dues and nondeductible therefrom. Additional subscriptions may be purchased at the rate of $29.95 per year. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue. Member: Business Publications Audit, American Business Media.

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Fighting Fear

In times like these, "overcoming objections" is not enough; battling fear requires serious discipline.

THE HOUSING RESCUE PLAN ROLLED OUT BY THE OBAMA administration in March is the 4th or 5th one to emerge since 2007 when foreclosures began to take on their Godzilla-like stature. The earlier plans were decidedly unsuccessful—they were described in an article on Bloomberg.com as "complete duds"—so it's easy to understand the skepticism the new plan generated before it was even fully outlined.

What's different about the criticism of the new plan is that so many of its detractors are focusing on who the plan does *not* help. The hardest hit, for example. Those whose homes lost the greatest value in the last couple of years, whose loan-to-value ratio is way over 105 percent, are not eligible for refinancing. And, of course, also not included are those homeowners who are struggling mightily, but not yet drowning.

Why have we gone from decrying bailouts in general to thinking that this new plan is not inclusive enough? My guess would be the loss of household wealth recently quantified by the Federal Reserve, a loss felt by nearly all Americans. The Fed reported that U.S. households lost more than $11 trillion, or about 18 percent, of their wealth (measured as assets such as homes and cash minus liabilities such as mortgages and other debt) in 2008. We lost $5 trillion in the last quarter of 2008 alone. Enormous numbers such as these are thrown around with impunity these days, but the *Wall Street Journal* put the figure in perspective by noting that the decline in 2008 "equals the combined annual output of Germany, Japan, and the U.K." We're talking big, big money here.

The last sizable loss of household wealth occurred in 2002 when the tech bubble burst. In that collapse, Americans lost what seems now to be a paltry 3 percent of their net worth, mainly in stocks. This time around, almost all assets have lost value. Stocks, bonds, homes, you name it. Together, they added up to the largest decline ever in the 57 years that the Fed has kept track.

We all feel it, and we're all worried about it. From the twenty-somethings who bought their first home three years ago to the sixty-somethings who were looking forward to retirement, it's struck a real note of fear. It's even sent a bunch of us to the bank to open savings accounts and driven many more to think very carefully about every purchase—especially homes. And it's greatly exacerbated the usual "Where's mine?" clamor that's accompanied the introduction of each bailout program.

It would be great if we could resist both the fear and the negative impulses it engenders. Unfortunately, those not covered by the new programs are going to find it more and more difficult (not to mention galling) to keep making the monthly payments on their vastly overvalued properties.



JAMES KEGLEY

But here's the deal. America's disappearing "wealth" was simply a function of the runup in home values along with the euphoria in the stock market generated by the sales of mortgage-backed securities. Looking at a chart measuring household wealth between 1980 and the end of 2008, you can see the extraordinary deviations caused by both the dot-com bubble around 2000 and the housing boom starting in 2003. The numbers, however, which escalated so quickly, do not reflect any actual underlying strength in our nation's economy and must go down again. Even after losing $11 trillion last year, we still have some distance to go before the normal trend line is restored.

As we approach the bottom, the bottom line for builders will be to focus laser-like attention on costs, both for themselves and for their customers. This month's "Field Report: New Direction" (page 70) shows how four companies are pushing themselves, their employees, and their trades to not only operate in the leanest and most efficient way possible but also to provide homes for buyers that offer the best value for the lowest price. And not just at closing but for the entire life of a home, with a goal of providing a predictable monthly cost for the foreseeable future. That would be priceless.



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Never Surrender

Builder magazine has been a big help to our company for most of our 24 year history. In 2008, information you personally gave me helped us make some great deals with two different banks. You asked that I let you know how our numbers turned out. You should know that we are in Florida. *Forbes* magazine mentioned our county for its high rate of foreclosures. But my staff would not go down without a fight. We took big hits on some toxic assets in order to maximize an IRS refund. I removed those numbers. What I am reporting to you is what actually happened as a result of our normal operations.

Total Income: $10,142,442
Cost of Sales: $7,942,315
Gross Profit: $2,200,127 *22%*
Indirect Cost: $1,034,969 *10%*
G&A: $920,962 *9%*
Net Pre-tax Profit: $244,232 *2%*

Every business course I never took would tell me these numbers are dismal. But in these times, in this industry, at this location, I'm actually proud of them. My staff didn't max their profit share checks, but they all got profit share checks and they haven't been asked to take cutbacks.

Our actual books, including the toxic asset loss and every other write-off we could find, show a 1,286,153 loss. That will generate a tax refund of $450,000. So far, 2009 looks better than 2008. We will see.

I am conflicted about the following editorial. One side of me realizes the less my competitors compete, the better for us. On the other side, this is a business I've spent most of my life doing and I have made a lot of friends in the industry. It is painful for me to see so many of them so totally defeated. In my eyes, many have just stopped trying. Builders need to realize we are not the arsonist that started this blaze! We shouldn't be the only ones held accountable for our debts. The lenders enjoyed some fantastic incomes for several years as we enjoyed our income gains. The assets are worth what they are worth. Personal guarantees or not, the second worst thing you can do in this industry is to win a lawsuit. The banks know that. The lenders will not realize as much return of their capital after foreclosures as they will if they work with their builders. Builders face some enormous problems. I don't discount that. But the defeated attitude is bound to bring on additional failures. If we can do what we did, so can others. But they have to try! Someone needs to get that message out. Are you the one?

NAME WITHHELD UPON REQUEST

Timing is Everything

I wanted to make those at Builder magazine aware of a discrepancy that most likely went overlooked in the February 2009 issue. On page 69 of that issue, an NAHB Brief was printed under the title "Money Back." It was a very informative article with good content and a title that, I'm sure, caught the eye of many builders around the country—especially in these economic times. I am a small builder in Nampa, Idaho, and although I don't buy building materials by the truckload, I did purchase a substantial amount of OSB product during the time period that was noted.


NAHB BRIEFS
Money Back
Open Ears
NATIONAL BEAT
No Stone Unturned

I took the time to visit the site to learn more about the lawsuit and how I might be able to take advantage of the settlement, only to be disappointed to find that I was too late. The deadline to file a claim in order to be compensated for damages was Jan. 9, 2009.

I think that this article would have been great news to many of us, had it been printed a month or two earlier. ...

Despite this minor error, I love Builder magazine and enjoy the information that is on the mark most of the time. I usually read cover to cover just to make sure that there *(see page 24)*

isn't something that someone else is doing that I don't know about. Thank you.

BUCK JACOBS
Owner
Tamarack Construction
Nampa, Idaho
Via e-mail

No Good News?

I wanted to share an opinion about your articles. I realize you need to report facts and people want to know what the pace is from one month to the next. What disappoints me is negative news, more often than not, appears to be your feature article. There is finally something positive to report, and it only makes the very last paragraph of your top story.

I guess I should give you some credit for at least acknowledging that there is some positive news as noted below.

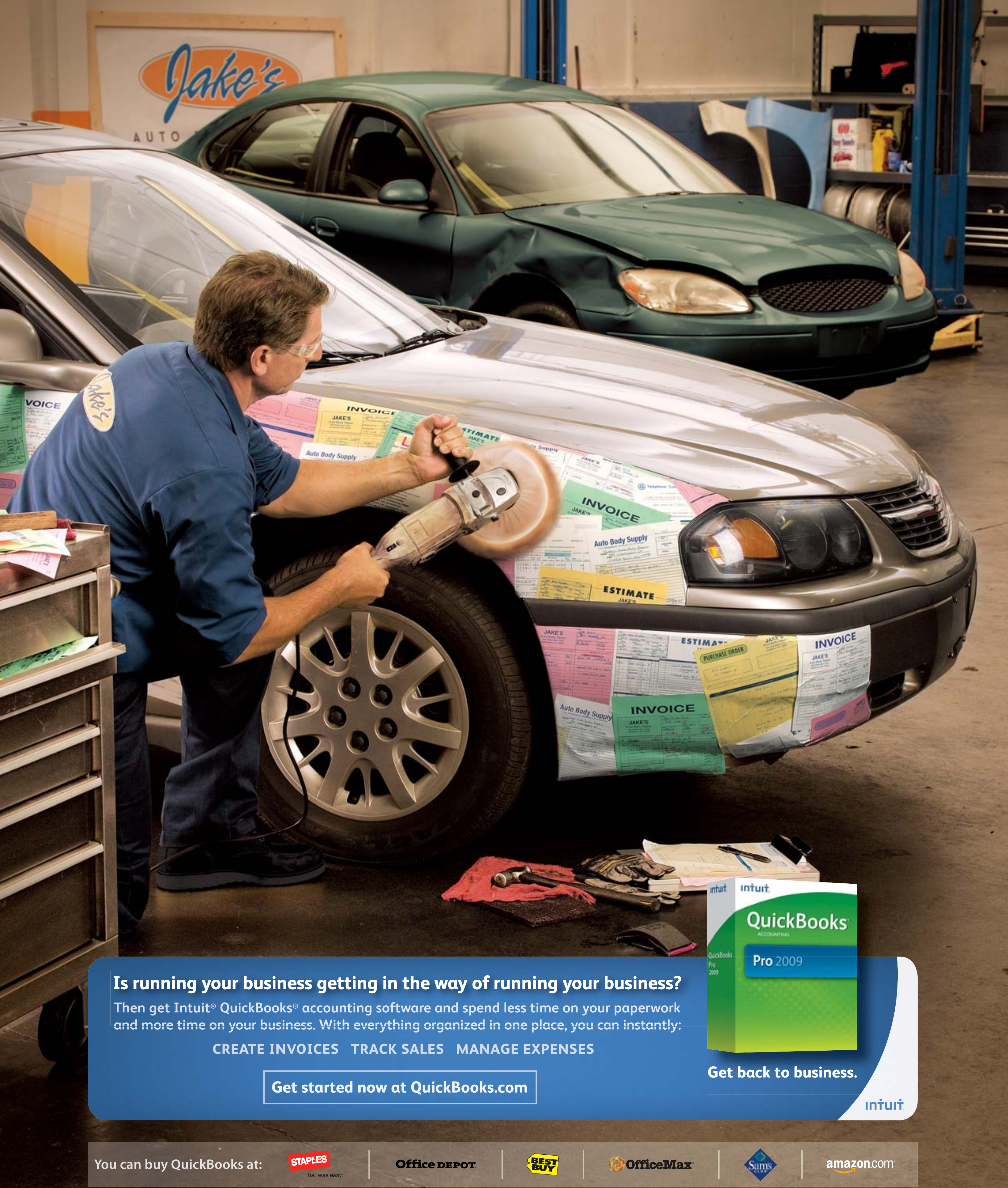
"Ironically given today's figures, builders have sounded more optimistic recently than they have in months, with many reporting improved buyer traffic in January," and "Even the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index improved by one point in February, albeit to a still-low reading of 9." [See "Builders Report Better Buyer Traffic in January" and "Builder Confidence Moves Upward in February," BuilderOnline.com.]

We see and hear bad news all the time. Being a source that is all about home building, why is it you can't find an opportunity to highlight the good news, even if it is of small proportion. Why can't the heading be: "In spite of a 10.2 percent slide, home builders report improved traffic and are optimistic the trend will continue."

Can't you find or write some lead articles that support home building? It's tough enough out here without people constantly highlighting the negatives of the industry.

RANDY MCNUTT
Executive Vice President
The Estridge Cos.
Indianapolis
Via e-mail

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Inside:

COMMENTARY AND ANALYSIS OF CURRENT EVENTS ■ EDITED BY JOHN CAULFIELD



DAVID CLARK

RESPONDING TO THE RECESSION

Breathing Room

Builders hope unemployment protection removes one more sales obstacle.

Unemployment is rising, and the list of builders offering buyers a financial backstop in the event of temporary joblessness is expanding. Their unemployment protection plans may be marketing tools primarily, but some builders intend to keep them around even after the recession subsides.

Lenders and mortgage companies have offered unemployment protection for years. And since the beginning of 2009, a growing number of builders—including Lennar, Toll Brothers, Ryland, Meritage Homes, and Taylor Morrison—are promoting it. Kelly Fink, regional marketing and Internet manager for Atlanta-based Bowen Family Homes, says her company launched its Safety Net program in February after hearing prospects say they would buy a house but were scared about being laid off. That fear is well founded since the U.S. Treasury estimates that the country's unemployment rate, at 8.1 percent in the second week of March, could shoot past 10 percent by 2010.

Here's how these programs work: A buyer is enrolled automatically, and if he or she involuntarily loses a job within two years of buying a house from the builder, the program covers the owner's mortgage payments for several consecutive months. Depending on the builder, the monthly payments covered can range up to $2,500 per month for six months.

Bowen's Safety Net and Lennar's Peace of Mind programs are underwritten by nonprofits. Bowen pays between $350 and $400 each to enroll buyers in AmeriDream's Dream *(see page 30)*

Keeper Mortgage Payment Relief program. Lennar is enrolling buyers in programs offered by the Rainy Day Foundation. Each group's programs go beyond unemployment protection to include tools to counsel and financially assist homeowners who experience unforeseen short-term money problems.

Rick del Sontro, Rainy Day's CEO, explains that builders or their mortgage affiliates pay between $550 and $600 per customer for services that would cost a buyer as much as $1,200 if purchased through a bank. The foundation's programs, which target FHA mortgage borrowers, are more comprehensive, he notes, because they provide pre- and post-purchase counseling and budgeting advice. Those enrolled can also tap into a pool of funds that the foundation dispenses as grants to owners who encounter short-term problems paying their mortgages such as a medical emergency. Last year, Rainy Day paid *(see page 32)*

UNCONVENTIONAL CONSTRUCTION

Going Up

How tall can wood-framed buildings go and still be safe?

THIS SUMMER, A SEVEN-STORY, 17,000-square-foot wood-framed condo tower will be placed on the world's largest earthquake shake plate, in Miki City, Japan, to test the resilience of taller wood buildings under seismic conditions. The NEESWood Capstone tests, as the project is known, will culminate a four-year-long research effort that involves five universities; the governments of the U.S., Canada, and Japan; and several manufacturers. Hawaii's Maui Homes is the builder.

The goal is to uncover evidence about the safety of higher mid-rise wood structures in seismic areas. The National Science Foundation, which provided a $1.4 million grant for this project, estimates that 75 million Americans live in places at risk from earthquakes. John van der Lindt, a professor of engineering at Colorado State University and the project's director, thinks the tests could prove the feasibility of using wood for buildings as tall as seven stories.

Wood-framed buildings are going higher in North America, Japan, and especially Europe. California's codes allow for a Type 3 building constructed from treated wood up to five stories, typically sitting atop a garage or concrete slab. On April 1, British Columbia raised the allowable height of wood-framed buildings to six stories, from four. And Japan just started allowing wood buildings up to five stories, from three.

In late February, tenants and owners started moving into what's being touted as the world's tallest wood building, a nine-story apartment tower in London's East End. The construction of that building—29 units within eight stories over one story of concrete—features layers of cross-laminated panels joined together, Tetris-like, with metal fittings.

The tower's architect, Andrew Waugh, says his company is planning a 17-story wood building and will experiment with a 25-story structure. That would be unheard of in the U.S., where the International Code Council (ICC) limits wood-framed buildings to four stories or six using "heavy timber," says Gary Nelson, ICC's senior staff engineer for architectural and engineering services.



TALL ORDER: A nine-story 29-unit tower in London was built with studs and laminated panels.

COURTESY WAUGH THISTLETON ARCHITECTS

Wood presents challenges, like shrinkage that causes structures to shift in ways that become more exaggerated as buildings get taller. Waugh acknowledges that humidity in many parts of the U.S. limits using wood for higher structures. But neither he nor other experts think existing fire codes in America pose insurmountable obstacles to building taller.

Wood construction has its benefits, too. Waugh says the increased cost of using laminated panels for the London project was offset by the reduction in its construction schedule to 49 weeks from the 72 it would have taken had concrete and steel been used.

A five-year analysis of seismic impact on wood-framed structures, conducted by CalTech and the Consortium of Universities for Research in Earthquake Engineering, found "a history of good performance," says Kelly Cobeen, who coauthored a book about those findings. But as wood buildings have grown taller in the Western U.S., there haven't been recent seismic events against which to gauge their performance. Hence the tests in Japan.

On June 23, the Capstone tower will be subjected to shaking that simulates earthquakes projected for every 72 years and 475 years. Then on July 17, its steel-framed first floor will be braced to the shake plate so the wood-framed structure can be tested separately against a seismic occurrence similar to what hit Northridge, Calif., in 1994. Van der Lindt expects the building to sustain "repairable" damages. As for the practicality of wood for buildings higher than six stories, he remains skeptical for many reasons including that "the horizontal diagram would have to transfer an awful lot of shear."—*J.C.*

out grants totalling $4 million, which del Sontro expects to double in 2009.

There's no question that builders are promoting unemployment protection to stimulate sales. Fink says Bowen's marketing for its Safety Net program targets both buyers and Realtors. Toll Brothers introduced its program in February as a three-month test. "If it's selling homes, we'll extend it. If it isn't, we won't," says Donald Salmon, president and CEO of TBI Mortgage, which gets 95 percent of its business from Toll.

On the other hand, Main Street Homes in Austin, Texas, is likely to keep its programs going after the market recovers. "It's becoming part of who we are as a locally owned builder," says vice president of sales Greg Smith. Main Street has been enrolling buyers in the Rainy Day emergency fund for several years and started offering unemployment protection through its lender, Scottsdale, Ariz.–based imortgage.com, at the beginning of 2009. As of Feb. 22, Main Street had sold 70 homes, and Smith is convinced that many buyers were attracted to the protection plan.—*J.C.*



UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS: Lennar is enrolling its buyers in a mortgage protection plan that's underwritten by the Rainy Day Foundation.

COURTESY RAINY DAY FOUNDATION

BUSINESS STRATEGIES

Deal or Fold

A developer and builder offer banks advice about bad assets.

A LAND CONSULTANT THAT HAS WORKED ON more than 8,000 projects has joined forces with a California builder who recently wound down his business, to offer a "one-stop shop for asset management" to banks that find themselves struggling to figure out what to do with the acres of unfinished real estate with uncertain values stuck in their portfolios.

Developers Research, an Irvine, Calif.–based developer, combined in February with Irvine-based Classic Pacific Construction, a newly formed builder whose president, John Patterson, two months earlier had closed his eight-year-old home building company, Classic Pacific Homes, a one-time division of Classic Homes of Colorado. During those eight years, Classic Pacific built more than 1,000 homes and developed 3,100 lots.

Patterson has been building homes since 1986 and says he always used Developers Research as "a second set of eyes," which was only natural given that Patterson and Barry Gross, Developers Research's president, have been friends since 1982.

There are slews of idled builders angling for contract-for-fee work from banks. What makes Developers Research different, says Gross, is the expertise it can bring to help financial institutions decide whether to take control of the distressed projects they've foreclosed on. "Many of these projects are based on plans that are four or five years old, and the product isn't contemporary, either," he explains. So Developers Research would come up with a new plan, present it to the bank, and then get the land re-entitled, often with an eye toward greater density and volume.

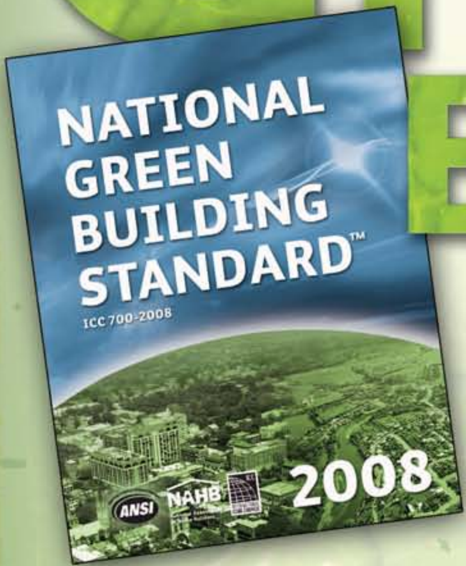
With Classic Pacific in tow, Developers Research can offer construction management services to complete the project, but that won't be a prerequisite for taking assignments from banks initially, Gross says.

Right now, the biggest problem banks face is calculating what their distressed assets are worth. Gross believes the bid-ask gap hasn't closed significantly yet because banks haven't been realistic, but also because "no one buying land today has an exit strategy," a problem that the lack of available construction financing magnifies. Gross envisions Developers Research eventually extending its services to municipalities that end up with patchy, unfinished subdivisions that builders and lenders have left for dead.—*J.C.*

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TOP SHELF

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Iron Side

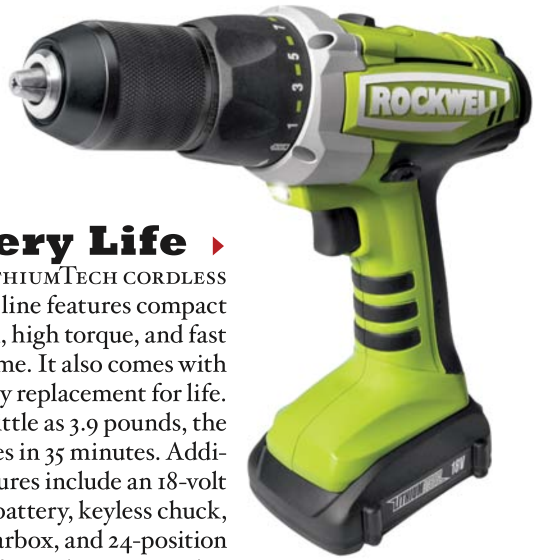
The FeTerra line of ornamental wrought-iron–style garage doors and accessories is inspired by Old World architecture. Four solid-panel aluminum doors with aluminum scrollwork are available as well as seven tempered glass designs with hand-forged scrollwork and accent pieces. Each door has a powder-coat finish and operates like a standard door. ■ **Cost: $6,200 for a door measuring 8 feet by 7 feet. Clopay Corp. 800-225-6729. www.clopaydoor.com.**





Hold Still

The MASA mudsill anchor saves installation time and offers increased load capacity, but its improved design also provides a one-to-one replacement of anchor bolts. The galvanized steel product features added reinforcements and fastener holes. ■ **Cost: 85 cents to $1. Simpson Strong-Tie. 800-999-5099. www.strongtie.com.**



Battery Life

The LithiumTech cordless drill/driver line features compact design, high torque, and fast charge time. It also comes with free battery replacement for life. Weighing as little as 3.9 pounds, the tool charges in 35 minutes. Additional features include an 18-volt lithium-ion battery, keyless chuck, two-speed gearbox, and 24-position clutch. ■ **Cost: $54.99 (battery charger) to $299.99 (drill/driver). Rockwell Power Tools. 866-514-7625. www.rockwelltools.com.**

Why Fyre

Simplifyre may be the industry's first electric see-through fireplace. Ideal for condos and apartments, the unit installs like a traditional hearth product and has a dual flame and standard bifold glass doors on each side. It comes with a remote control and a custom surround. ■ **Cost: $1,299. Simplifyre by Hearth & Home Technologies. 800-927-6841. www.hearthnhome.com.**

(see page 36)





Unified Front

The problem with typical ceramic floors is that subfloor, underlayment, and tile surface move as one unit, making them prone to cracks. Ditra-XL uncoupling membrane neutralizes the differential movement between the substrate and tile and helps eliminate the problem. It provides waterproofing and vapor management, and its thickness allows for even transitions between tile and 3/4-inch-thick wood floors. ■ **Cost: $1.90 per square foot. Schluter Systems. 800-472-4588. www.schluter.com.**

Great Outdoors

You can spend a lot of time building an outdoor kitchen or you can simply order one from a specialist. Made from teak or cypress, these weather-resistant cabinets can withstand over 100-degree heat or temperatures below freezing, and their Perma-Panel construction will not warp, crack, or deteriorate. Nine door styles are available. ■ **Cost: from $5,500. Atlantis Outdoor Kitchens. 800-366-2971. www.atlantiscabinetry.com.**



Metal Mosaics

The company has added metal to its collection of stone tile products. Offered as a time- and cost-saving alternative to labor-intensive piecemeal tile installation, the stainless steel pieces are arranged in a pattern and individually attached to mesh sheets measuring 12 inches by 12 inches. A variety of shapes, styles, and colors is available. ■ **Cost: $14.80 to $41.10. Architectural Products by Outwater. 800-631-8375. www.outwater.com.**



New Choice

If you're a purist and prefer natural materials for exterior applications, you can add another wood option to your list. Accoya is made from a process that increases wood's acetyl molecules, making it more durable and dimensionally stable. The UV-resistant boards can be used for a variety of applications including siding and decking. ■ **Cost: $3.50 to $4.80 per linear foot. East Teak Fine Hardwoods. 214-751-8988. www.certifiedhardwoods.com.**



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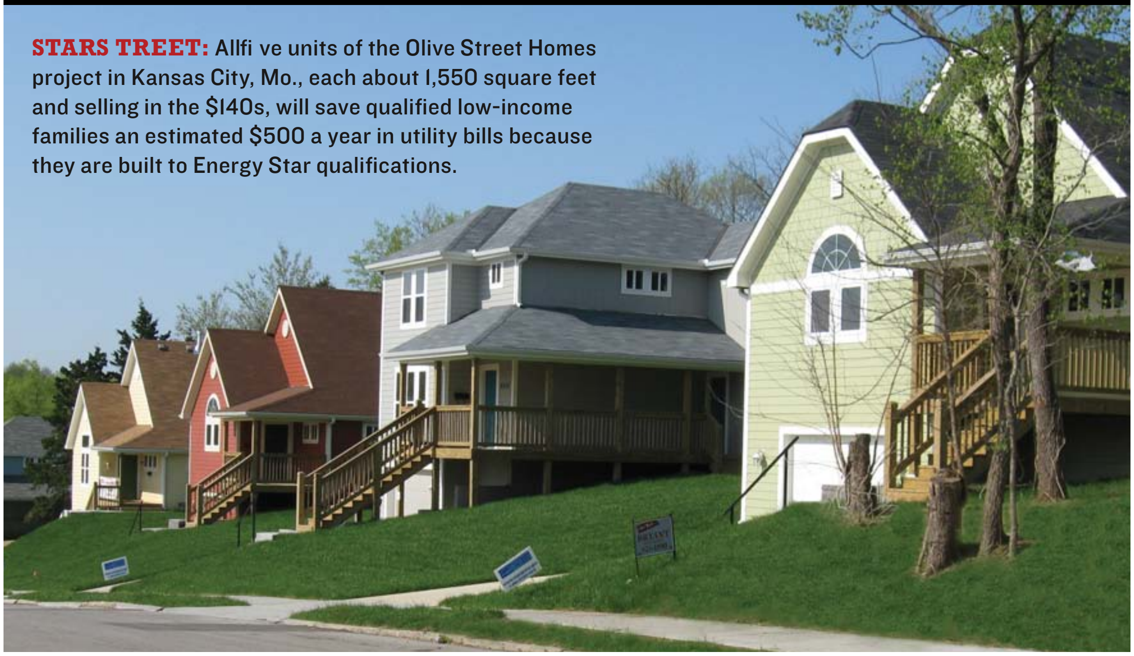
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GREEN HOUSE

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION, PRODUCTS & SALES ■ EDITED BY RICH BINSACCA



STARS TREET: Allfi ve units of the Olive Street Homes project in Kansas City, Mo., each about 1,550 square feet and selling in the $140s, will save qualified low-income families an estimated $500 a year in utility bills because they are built to Energy Star qualifications.

COURTESY BLUE HILLS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORP.

AFFORDABLE GREEN

Go Green to Get Green

Energy Star targets public funding sources to integrate its standards into affordable housing projects.

THERE'S LITTLE DOUBT THAT LOW-INCOME families can benefit from green building, specifically in the form of lower utility bills, reduced long-term maintenance costs, and healthier indoor air. But integrating green into an already tight public housing budget can be problematic.

So instead of trying to convince builders of low-income and workforce housing to follow its guidelines at the risk of losing out to a lower bidder, Energy Star is pitching its program to the various local, state, and federal entities that finance or package funding for public housing projects to help building owners and occupants reap the benefits. "We're reaching out to them to add Energy Star as one of the criteria in their application processes," says Brian Ng, the affordable housing coordinator for Energy Star for Homes. "The most effective *(see page 42)*

Trade Bait

The Efficiency First trade association for home energy–related contractors, product manufacturers, and other stakeholders is looking to capitalize on the Obama administration's stimulus plan to upgrade the performance of 2.5 million homes as a way to reduce the carbon footprint of the built environment and create a sustainable pool of green-collar jobs. Launched in February, the group hopes to create a critical mass of membership and information to carry enough weight to impact policy decisions and inspire incentive programs to improve the energy efficiency of the nation's housing stock. For more information, visit www.efficiencyfirst.org.

Storm Watch

Ever since Hurricane Andrew swept through South Florida in 1992, coastal building codes and product manufacturers have seesawed between tougher standards and products to meet them. A recent step up on the supply side is ▸

Pella's redesigned Architect Series windows, patio doors, and transoms with its HurricaneShield impact-resistant and shatter-proof glazing, which sandwiches an



advanced polymer between its two layers of glass to withstand the impact of a 2x4 traveling at 50 feet per second and mitigate breaches in the building envelope. The windows also feature FSC-certified wood and are Energy Star qualified. Visit www.pella.com.

Designed to Earn

The federal Energy Star for Homes program is taking a step back to address housing design as a measure of energy efficiency. Its new Designed to Earn designation enables architects and builders to qualify and promote their floor plans and specifications under the Energy Star–program guidelines. Though certification at the design stage does not guarantee compliance for the finished house, it sets the stage for builders to more easily follow the program and ▸

way to improve the energy efficiency of affordable housing is to target the money."

To date, 40 community development corporations (CDCs) and state and municipal housing finance agencies (HFAs) include Energy Star within their application processes, typically by awarding extra points to those who promise to follow the program standards. Seven of them, says Ng, take it a step further by mandating Energy Star to gain access to public funds, grants, tax incentives, and low-interest loans, among other sources of funds.

One of these is Blue Hills Community Services, a nonprofit CDC serving the Kansas City, Mo., area and this year's recipient of the national Energy Star award for excellence in affordable housing. Blue Hills recently completed Olive Street Homes, in which all five detached units—partially funded by New Market Tax Credits and HUD dollars, among other sources—are Energy Star–qualified *(see page 44)*



BIG DREAMS: Projects such as Camden Dreams, a housing project for young adults aging out of foster care, benefit from integrating Energy Star into their specs.

DESIGN FLEXIBILITY

Green For All Styles

A Florida builder proves that extreme green building can suit any architectural style.

When a prospective home buyer from the U.K. balked at the idea of building green for fear of an industrialized look, Sarasota, Fla.–based custom builder Josh Wynne convinced him that he could combine high-performance and an authentic rendition of the local architectural style.

The result is an efficient and well-appointed 2,229-square-foot home with a 413-square-foot dwelling over a detached garage that blends seamlessly within its infill neighborhood and earned a platinum rating from LEED for Homes.

Wynne also kept an eye on costs, building the project for less than $190 a square foot, including the costs associated with gaining LEED certification. "It's a team effort," he says, noting specifically his energy rater and LEED-AP consultant. "You just need to be very specific and document everything."

The builder reduced expenses by sticking to a tight, seven-month schedule and working closely with his subs and suppliers to sharpen their pencils while maintaining their margins. He also reduced his dump fees to a mere $610 by diverting 85 percent of the project's construction waste away from landfills, earned faster approvals of his permits due to his commitment to green building, and leveraged a variety of rebates and tax credits to offset premiums for green building practices and products—the latter of which helped pay for a peel-and-stick photovoltaic system and the $3,100 fees for the LEED certification process.

Wynne estimates he spent only about 10 hours on LEED-related paperwork, a small fraction of the time he spent investigating and testing products and systems that would enable the house to qualify under that standard—a knowledge base he can now amortize across future projects. "The extra cost to meet a minimum green standard is zero if you do it right," he says, noting that he even earned money for recycling scrap metals while gaining points for waste management practices. "This house proves you can build to an extreme level of green without compromising design or spending too much money."—*R.B.*



LITMUST EST: Josh Wynne's LEED-platinum house in Sarasota, Fla., looks like all the other homes in its infill neighborhood but performs far better than almost any other house in the country.

PHOTOS: TOP: COURTESY CENTER FOR FAMILY SERVICES; BOTTOM: MATT MCCOURTNEY

certification process while enabling them to market homes that have already passed a certain amount of muster with the nation's best-known brand for energy efficiency. For more information, go to www.energystar.gov and search for Designed to Earn.

Green Stripes

The Kitchen Cabinet Manufacturers Association's Environmental Stewardship Program, a voluntary effort launched in 2006 to help KCMA members demonstrate and promote their commitment to green-built cabinets and vanities, recently earned a favorable review from ANSI-accredited Architectural Testing. The report validates not only the ESP's certification process and administration, but also its reference as the benchmark for green cabinet standards in the National Green Building Standard. More than 150 NCMA members are enrolled in the program. For more information and a list of certified suppliers and brands, go to www.greencabinetsource.org.

UPlink

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to be up to 40 percent more energy efficient than homes meeting the standard energy code, resulting in an estimated $500 annual savings in utility costs per house and a five-year payback on the investment to reach those efficiencies.

Blue Hills has integrated Energy Star into its projects since 2004. Olive Street Homes inspired the corporation to require the standards going forward. Olive Street also inspired the adoption of a city ordinance to apply Energy Star guidelines to all new and gut-rehab residential projects as of last year. "[It's] worth the cost when considering the savings that are passed along to the most economically sensitive population," says Joanne Bussinger, Blue Hills' executive director. "These practices have revolutionized the standards [we use] in regard to durability, health, and affordability in urban housing developments."

Meanwhile, the Green Homes Office (GHO) of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs has become that state's go-to agency regarding Energy Star. In 2006, the office mandated the standards and continued subsidizing the cost to make new, affordable homes compliant and boosted the state funds available for low-income and workforce housing development applications by $2 million for those that exceeded the baseline Energy Star home energy rating system (HERS) score by five to 10 points. "Energy Star is a platform for achieving our green affordable housing goals," says spokesman Chris Donnelly. Nearly 4,000 Energy Star–qualified homes have flowed through the GHO since 2000. "It provides a set of cohesive guidelines and clear expectations for project design and construction teams."—*R.B.*

WATER-SAVING TIPS

Don't Forget the Water

A pair of programs helps builders integrate water conservation into their green building practices.

In California, where Gov. Schwarzenegger declared a 20 percent reduction in water use statewide by 2012, a traveling home show exhibit called Water Wise Landscape displays a variety of home water-saving practices and devices to help homeowners and builders meet the mandate.

Sponsored by Sustainable Environmental Education (SEE), a nonprofit outreach organization in Whittier, Calif., the booth educates passers-by about smart water use. "It's about strategically placing water and maximizing its use," says spokesman Nick Federoff, who also hosts a syndicated radio show on gardening. "We don't advocate getting rid of turf, but instead using the right grass and watering and feeding schedule to use water more efficiently."

The booth showcases such products as drip irrigation systems as well as lesser-known solutions such as a valve that automatically blocks water from spewing out of a broken sprinkler head and a liquid polymer that helps soil retain irrigation water.

Meanwhile, plumbing giant Kohler recently launched SaveWaterAmerica.com, an online campaign for consumers and housing professionals on water conservation. Completion of a short survey on the site (providing the company with some research data about home water use) triggers a donation of $1's worth of Kohler products to Habitat for Humanity up to $500,000, to match the company's standing $500,000 pledge to the affordable housing developer, enough to outfit 600 Habitat homes with water-saving products.—*R.B.*



STEM THE FLOW: Kohler's line of plumbing products, including the dual-flush Saile toilet that can conserve up to 25,000 gallons of water per year compared to traditional flush units, is part of the company's recent efforts to reduce water use in new and existing homes.

JAMES F. WILSON

GOT GREEN PROJECTS, PRODUCTS, OR DESIGNS?

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SALES STRATEGIES

TIPS AND TACTICS FOR SALES SUCCESS ■ EDITED BY PAT CURRY

LEAD GENERATION

Pay-Per-Click 101

Even the smallest builder can connect with prospects with this powerful tool.

In a recent survey released by Microsoft Advertising adCenter, nearly three-fourths of small business owners said they'd rather work on filing their taxes than set up a search engine marketing campaign. That's a shame because it can be an affordable, measurable way to connect with prospective customers at the time they're ready to buy.

Among the many search engine marketing methods, the lion's share of the industry is based on pay-per-click (PPC) advertising.

"Everyone wants to be No. 1 on search results," says Greg Bray, president of Melbourne, Fla.–based marketing firm Blue Tangerine Solutions. "What pay-per-click offers is an almost guaranteed way to get on the front page [of search results]."

At its simplest, PPC advertising is an auction. You pick out phrases that you think your prospective customers will use to search for you online; for builders, it might be "Atlanta townhomes" or "new homes Cleveland." You place bids based on what you want to pay for each of those clicks—and where you want to end up in the search results. You only get charged when someone clicks on your ad.

Bids can start as low as a dime and go much higher. Bray says the vast majority of keywords will go for between 75 cents and $2.50. You'll pay the most for the top spot in the results—but that's not necessarily where you'll get the biggest bang for your buck.

"We don't generally find that being No. 1 is cost effective," he says. "The best return on investment comes in that fourth, fifth, or sixth spot because the cost is lower."

START WITH KEYWORDS

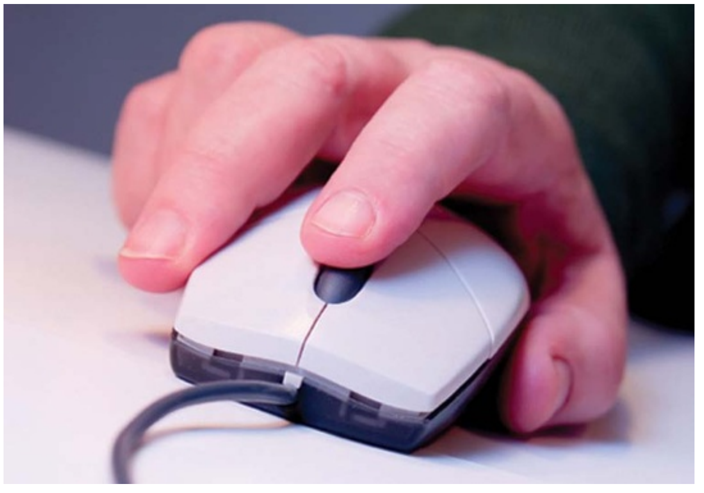
The process starts with choosing your keywords, says Jessica Covello, a senior account manager with Atlanta-based Communications 21, which works with several home builders. "Keywords are the backbone to any successful pay-per-click campaign," she explains, "and since you're paying by the click, you want to be as targeted and on-point as possible."

She recommends talking to current homeowners and colleagues about the keywords they have used in their home searches. Also, go through your Web site, your brochures, and other collateral materials to pick out central messages that could be used as keywords.

Wondering about whether your keywords will work? Bruce Williams, development manager for Cleveland-based thunder::tech, a Web marketing firm, notes that there are great tools available to help you. "These tools can recommend variations of similar keywords that might have higher search volumes than the ones you might initially brainstorm," he says. He likes the keyword software from Web CEO (www.WebCEO.com) and Google's own search recommendation tools (www.google.com/sktool/), both of which are free.

If you come up with a list of 10 keywords, don't panic when you start doing the math. You control the cost. You set a budget of how much you want to spend per day. When you've reached that amount, the ads simply won't appear anymore that day.

You also can keep costs down by limiting the geographic region where your ads will appear—few builders *(see page 48)*



need national reach. Plus, you can limit your ads to specific days and times. If you've noticed a lot of traffic on your Web site in the evenings and on weekends, you can target those times for your ads to appear.

AD COPY MATTERS

The next step in the process is to write descriptive ads to match your keywords. Mike Lyon, author of *Browsers to Buyers: Proven Strategies for Selling New Homes Online*, says he's seen builders goof in this area by making their ads too generic. For example, for the search term "new homes Dallas," they might have an ad that says, "XYZ Homes, building quality homes that fit your lifestyle."

"While it might produce more click-throughs, they may not be the buyers the builder is looking for," Lyon explains. "Be very specific and incorporate the search term." So, XYZ Homes' ad would look like: "New homes in Dallas, brand-new Energy Star homes starting in the low 100s." "This tells the consumer exactly what they will find," Lyon says.

Once a prospect clicks on an ad, most companies send them to the home page of their Web site. To the extent that it's feasible, it's better to have landing pages that relate to the ad. That way, the customer gets a result that matches what he was searching for.

TRACK RESULTS

The final element of PPC is tracking to make sure your keywords are generating the right kinds of traffic. That's the beauty of search engine marketing; the amount of detailed information it generates is enormous.

Jeffrey Nichols, manager of search engine optimization for Atlanta-based McRae, an interactive advertising firm that works with builders, cites the case of Bowen Family Homes. Bowen has been using PPC marketing for nearly five years. In 2008, it accounted for more than 10 percent of the builder's Web site traffic. Eighty percent of the traffic arriving via PPC were first-time visitors to the site who spent more than 3 1/2 minutes on the site and viewed an average of eight pages. They also were 50 percent more likely to convert from traffic to a lead when compared to all other traffic sources.

"Measurable results is one of the things that got me really excited about PPC," Nichols says. "You can see exactly what happens when people hit your Web site."—*P.C.*

Subject Matters

E-mail is an important part of any sales and marketing effort for a new-home builder. If you've ever wondered what to put in a subject line, a new study says you'll come out ahead if you keep it short and sweet. Dallas-based Epsilon, the world's largest permission-based e-mail marketer, studied a billion e-mails from nearly 20,000 separate campaigns and found that, overall, shorter subject lines produce higher open rates and click rates. Its advice to e-mail marketers is to front-load subject lines with the most important information and only use longer subject lines when there's a compelling reason for it.

HOME BUYER DEMOGRAPHICS

Make Room for Mom

Millions of baby boomers expect to share a home with a parent.

When the First Family announced that Michelle Obama's mother was moving to Washington, D.C., to help take care of the children, they became part of a trend in the U.S. According to an AARP survey, the number of multi-generational households has grown from 5 million in 2000 to 6.2 million in 2008. Nearly a quarter of baby boomers expect that their parents or in-laws will move in with them—and half of those who anticipate that living arrangement are excited about it, says Elinor Ginzler, AARP's senior vice president for livable communities and co-author of the organization's book *Caring for Your Parents*.

The AARP survey information is not recent enough to reflect the economic downturn, but Ginzler says she thinks the economy is part of the reason for recent increases in interest.

"Older family members could be providing financial assistance," she says, "but a lot of times, this is just something people want to do." For builders, this burgeoning lifestyle trend represents an opportunity to offer a home that will meet these buyers' unique needs, both in terms of floor plans and amenities.

"There's certainly a niche for multi-generational neighborhoods and consumers," says Janis Ehlers, a Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.–based marketing consultant who specializes in active adults. "There are just a tremendous number of people who won't seek to move to senior communities. While we haven't been geared to see this [living arrangement] in the media and the movies, this is the way it was years ago. It's good and it works, and more power to the developers that want to go in that direction."

Buyers who are shopping for a home that they will share with an older parent will be interested in universal design features that promote safe, comfortable *(see page 50)*

Thanks, Really

Showing your customers that you appreciate their business may be easier than you think. In a survey commissioned by Citi's ThankYou Network and conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs, 94 percent of Americans said that "more than anything else, getting a genuine thank you from someone is the best kind of reward that you can get." On the business side, 90 percent of those surveyed said it's more important than ever for companies to reward their loyal customers; 72 percent of those surveyed said they are "surprised" when a company thanks them for their business.

The take-away for builders? There's plenty of opportunity here to make a positive, memorable impression on customers by showing your sincere appreciation.





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living, Ginzler says. Beyond that, space planning itself is critical. "Do you have living space for two generations, or are you moving Mom into a spare bedroom? It's not the same thing."

That's absolutely true, says Snellville, Ga.–based builder Roy Wendt, president of Wendt Builders, which specializes in active adult homes. He also speaks from experience; his own mother lived with him for several years.

"They have to have their space," he says. "They don't want to feel like they're imposing."

He's had success with homes that incorporate two master suites, with the second master tied into a laundry room that can be accessed through a walk-in closet. He also offers a three-car garage "because people have lots of stuff."



Along with shared space in the house, multi-generational buyers want a shared community, too.

"[These buyers] do value the common spaces with neighbors, where not only their parents can find socializing opportunities, but they can as well," says Nanette Overly, vice president of sales and marketing for Dublin, Ohio–based Epcon Communities. "Boomers kind of invented group therapy. They're not shy about sharing their struggles with each other."—*P.C.*

Signs That Sell

For builders, signage drives traffic to your door, says La Plata, Md.–based real estate marketing pro Tom Nelson. The three components of signage are directional signs, the entrance sign, and the model home/sales center sign. Directional signs should be carefully placed and easy to read. Entrance signs should be highly visible and include product type, amenities, and a phone number. The model center sign should include the model name, hours, and a phone number. All three should include your Web address.

GOT A SALES TIP?

E-MAIL DENISE DERSIN AT:
ddersin@hanleywood.com

Buyer's Remorse

Cancellations are inevitable in new-home sales. Home buyers may not be able to sell their existing home or qualify for financing. What builders can avoid, though, are cancellations that arise from buyer's remorse. Auburn, Calif.–based new-home sales trainer Jeff Shore says almost all buyers experience a let-down within a couple of days of signing the contract. The best defense against buyer's remorse, he says, is to contact buyers within 24 hours of signing—or by the end of the same day if you sense they are particularly nervous—to congratulate them and remind them about their reasons for buying a new home. Tell them how excited you are for them and reassure them that you will be there to answer any questions they might have about the paperwork and to guide them through the construction process.

FUTURE OF MARKETING

Mobile Mindset

Builders must consider Web site performance for viewing on Web-enabled phones.

As more and more people access the Internet through Web-enabled cell phones, builders need to optimize their Web sites for the mobile world. The latest Web-enabled phones, such as the iPhone, perform a lot like a desktop computer, but they have an important limitation—as of yet, they can't read Flash programs, says Dennis O'Neil, an Internet marketing consultant in Monkton, Md., who works primarily with builders. Many Web sites use this program to navigate around their sites, which means that iPhone users will only see your home page.

To reach mobile Web surfers, O'Neil recommends creating sites that pare down the information to what is truly most important.

"Focus on the content, make it simple, and make it large," O'Neil says. "If people land on a builder Web site, they want to know what you build, where you build, and how much it costs."

They also want functionality, and mobile phones offer some astonishing capabilities, especially when mobile Web sites are tied to text messaging campaigns. It's as simple as putting a sign in front of a model home with a note to send a text message with a specific code to the agent. An automated response would return a link with information about the house.

"The power of being able to do that sitting in your car is tremendous," O'Neil says. "The iPhone and other phones like it are going to make mobile Web surfing more accessible. Our current and next generation of buyers will just expect that builders will be accessible on these kinds of tools."—*P.C.*



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call for entries

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Entry form and fee

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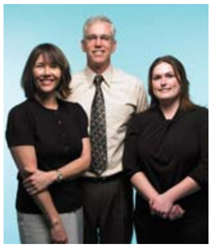
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PRODUCTS

PRODUCTS AND TOOLS EVERY BUILDER SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ■ EDITED BY NIGEL F. MAYNARD



CIAO BELLA: Can't afford stone? BellaStone panels might ease your pain. The panels feature the details, shadow lines, and texture of quarried stone but can be installed with basic woodworking tools. It does not need painting and requires no ongoing maintenance. ■ **Exterior Portfolio by Crane. 800-366-8472. www.exteriorportfolio.com.**

STONEFACE: KuraStone fiber-cement panels allow builders to create the look of stacked stone. Available in three colors, the panels are installed using the manufacturer's hidden clip system, which does not require special tools or labor and can be installed on a variety of substrates. ■ **Nichiha USA. 866-424-4421. www.nichiha.com.**



Choose Sides

What is the best exterior material to use on your houses?

IF YOU ASK THE BRICK INDUSTRY, THEY'D tell you that brick is the best siding material. The vinyl industry would make the same claim for their product. So would the fiber-cement people, and so on.

This level of partisanship is expected, but the answer is really more complicated. Brick is everything the industry says it is—strong, durable, classic. And vinyl is as maintenance free and easy to install as its industry often claims.

But the "best" siding for your house depends on other issues: the results you're looking for, the region you're in, the architectural style of the house you're building, how much your buyers are willing to spend, and lots of other things.

R. McAllister Lloyd, for example, builds cottages in the Northeast, so he prefers cedar or redwood shingles because they have "more of a cottage feel," says the owner of Creative Cottages in Freeport, Maine. "Most of the time, cottages in New England had white cedar shingles because [the trees] were readily available."

But times have changed. Wood siding is expensive and requires maintenance, so buyers of Lloyd's mid-priced homes often choose other options. "A lot of people are going for zero maintenance so they choose vinyl or something else," Lloyd says. "Manufacturers have worked on the colors and the look, so [vinyl] has *(see page 56)*

FOAMBOARD: A 7-inch profile is the newest addition to the manufacturer's CedarBoards XL insulated siding line. The contoured foam insulation helps block sound infiltration and provides added strength and rigidity to the board. It measures 16 feet 8 inches long and helps reduce seams by 40 percent. Twelve low-gloss colors are available. ■ **CertainTeed. 800-233-8990. www.certainteed.com.**



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gotten better over the last 15 years."

With a market share just above 30 percent (brick and stucco stand at 25 percent each), vinyl leads the category, but the product has its detractors. Generally, architects—who often are purists who prefer wood—are not among its fans. The problem, they say, is that the product tries to be something that it's not—in this case, wood. They also say that vinyl feels flimsy. Production and large-volume builders, however, love vinyl, especially the cost. According to *RSMeans Residential Cost Data 2009*, vinyl has an installed cost of $182 per square (or a 10-foot-by-10-foot area). The closest competitor—fiber cement—costs $297 per square. Nevertheless, the industry insists price is not the only driver.

"It's clear that vinyl has the lowest installed cost, but that's not the only reason [it's No. 1]," says Jery Huntley, president of the Vinyl Siding Institute in Washington, D.C. Huntley points to vinyl's diverse range of profiles and colors, its durability and weather resistance, and its low-maintenance benefits.

The brick industry often hears the flip side of that argument—that its installed cost of $1,038 per square is too expensive for most buyers, which may explain why some builders use brick on the front elevation and another material, usually vinyl, on the remaining three sides.

"Brick costs more than some other commonly used siding materials because brick is a premium product, but it's not nearly as expensive as you might think," the Reston, Va.–based Brick Industry Association (BIA) says on its Web site. "In many parts of the country, a new brick home will cost you only a small percentage more than a comparable vinyl-sided home."

Different siding products tend to dominate in different parts of the country. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2007 about 81 percent of new single-family homes in the Northeast were covered with vinyl and about 65 percent in the Midwest. The census also indicated that brick is king in the South with about 42 percent, and stucco rules the West with 61 percent.

"That's historical preference," Huntley explains. "It's what the houses in that area looked like. In New England, you have styles like Cape Cod and clapboard and in the South you have more brick and clay." It also explains stucco's popularity in the Southwest, she adds.

"We believe it is most accurate to look at the national brick industry as a series of individual brick markets, [rather] than a larger set of brick regions," says Stephen Sears, senior director of marketing and communications at BIA. "The reason for this is that there are strong brick markets throughout the country."

The best siding option often comes down to what's appropriate for the style of the home. Stucco might work for a modern house but less so for a classic Cape Cod. And for many people, a colonial should be clad in brick. No matter what your preferred siding happens to be, the category is awash in innovations such as insulated vinyl, thin-brick veneer, recycled paper cladding, wood veneer composite, and fiber cement that mimics stone.

One of these innovations is prefinished clapboard and vertical siding and trim milled from cellular PVC from Chicopee, Mass.–based NuCedar Mills.

"We're feeling good about where we are at the moment," CEO Tom Loper says. "We've carved out a niche in the high-end market between fiber cement and cedar." Priced about 40 percent more than fiber cement and 25 percent to 35 percent less than cedar, NuCedar is especially popular in coastal areas and where severe weather is a threat, says Loper. "It has no wicking properties and holds up to Dade County, [Fla.], standards, withstanding wind speeds exceeding 150 miles per hour." *(see page 58)*



HIT THE BRIX: Tru-Brix is a thin-brick cladding system that is ideal for new construction or existing houses. Designed to replace vinyl, wood, or aluminum, the thin bricks are produced in the same manner as traditional products but attach to mounted steel rails. Mortar is applied to the joints and hand-tooled like traditional brickwork. It comes in over 50 colors. ■ **Redland Siding Systems. 301-223-7700. www.tru-brix.com.**



CEDARLIGHT: NuCedar Weatherboard looks like painted wood, but the prefinished clapboard is milled from solid PVC boards. The product has a historically correct 7/16-inch profile in a 6 1/2-inch exposure and resists insects, moisture, and rot. It comes in 22 standard colors or can be ordered in over 1,400 custom hues. ■ **NuCedar Mills. 866-393-8883. www.nucedar.com.**

GOT A NEW PRODUCT?

E-MAIL NIGEL F. MAYNARD AT:
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Tile Watch

Even in a bad market, tile is still a good way to create value.

Some things in the home building industry remain constant: Home buyers generally prefer traditional architecture; stone countertops will always be popular; and people love tile. The challenge for builders is in learning how to use the products in a new and interesting way and to do it for less money.

One industry insider says it's not that hard. "In recent years, technology has allowed tile manufacturers to create realistic stone looks made from ceramic and porcelain that echo the same movement, coloring, and texture of natural stone," says Lori Kirk-Rolley, senior director of marketing at Dal-Tile Corp. in Dallas. "In some cases, we've even been able to take the most popular attributes of different stones and materials and merge them into one look."

Most of the innovation in tiles comes from Europe—mainly Italian and Spanish manufacturers that export large amounts of products here. (Imports account for about 80 percent of the tiles purchased in the U.S.) But U.S. companies are offering their own versions of trends that originate in Europe. Kirk-Rolley says, for example, that Daltile now offers products that look like stained concrete, aged leather, or terra cotta.

And ceramic is not your only option. These days tiles come in a seemingly endless collection of materials including metal, wood, bamboo, and glass, which is a perennial favorite. Kirk-Rolley says using these pieces as accents alongside ceramic can create a sophisticated look.

Glass is usually reserved for high-end applications, but more affordable products are now available. Trend USA, for example, recently introduced a line of recycled glass mosaics that starts at a relatively cheap $10 per square foot. And with a little leg work, you can find online retailers offering products for about $6 or $7 per square foot.

Of course, you could stick with an oldie but goody. "One of today's most popular styles, white subway tile, is a glazed ceramic tile, and it's also one of the least expensive and most versatile," Kirk-Rolley says. "Pick up any interior design magazine and you're likely to see subway tile used in kitchens and bathrooms of homes at all price points, from quaint bungalows and starter houses to large custom homes and renovations." **B**



COLOR ME GOOD: The Italian manufacturer's latest offering is a porcelain line called Xtra Collection, which includes bold colors and square, circular, and triangular shapes. The geometric shapes are cut directly into the porcelain slabs, and users can choose different color combinations. Sizes range from 6-inch square tiles to 24-inch-by-24-inch formats. ■ **GranitiFiandre USA. 888-903-4263. www.granitifiandreusa.com.**



NATURALS TATE: Pure is a porcelain line that looks like natural stone. Using layers of colors and shades, the company created four hues that can be installed in any environment. Sizes vary from mosaics measuring 1 inch by 3 inches to 20-inch-by-20-inch filed tiles. Listellos are also available. ■ **Level. 972-232-3804. www.level-usa.com.**



COBBLEC OBBLE: The handmade products of the Cobblestone Series are made by dropping molten glass onto a flat metal surface. The color is then fired into the underside. Available in white or variegated gray, the tiles are mesh-mounted, feature 30 percent post-consumer waste glass, and come in a polished or tumbled finish. ■ **Hakatai Enterprises. 888-667-2429. www.hakatai.com.**



FEEL THIS: Containing a minimum of 80 percent post-consumer recycled glass bottles, FEEL consists of 12 colors derived from the natural hues of earth (greens and browns) and sea (shades of blue) as well as white, gray, and black. The tiles measure $^{3}/_{4}$-inch by $^{3}/_{4}$-inch and can be purchased as a single color or in patterns. ■ **Trend USA. 866-508-7363. www.trend-group-usa.com.**

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DIGITAL HOME

SMART TECHNOLOGY FOR NEW HOMES ▪ EDITED BY BRAD GRIMES

OFFERING TECHNOLOGY

Holding Their Own

Despite the downturn, research shows builders continue to offer home technology.

RALPH CORBO BUILDS MILLION-DOLLAR homes in western Connecticut. A member of the NAHB and the Custom Electronics Design & Installation Association, The Corbo Group has long sold new homes with robust technology packages. But the market for its spec homes has virtually dried up, so late last year the company took an unprecedented step. It snapped up a foreclosed nine-lot subdivision in Waterbury, Conn., and made plans to build and sell $200,000 starter homes. The question became what home technology the company could offer, if any, and still hit its price point.

"The family that's going to buy these homes is a couple of 28-year-olds, just got married, and they have laptops, iPods, and wide-screen TVs," Corbo says. "Technology is part of who they are. So we decided we couldn't give up our edge, our belief that technology was an important part of our homes."

According to new research from the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), 85 percent of builders agree with Corbo that offering technology is important to marketing new homes. CEA's annual "State of the Builder Study," done in conjunction with the NAHB Research Center and released last month, indicates builders who have in the past embraced options such as structured wiring, multiroom audio, and home theaters continue to do so when cutting back offerings seems logical.

"Even in this down housing market, builders remain largely committed to, and even recognize positive revenue gains from, home technologies," says Steve Koenig, director of industry analysis for CEA.

The percentage offering systems to home buyers has increased since the study's inception in 2003 and remained steady during the recent downturn. Structured wiring to support in-home networks continues to be the most popular item, with 87 percent of builders indicating they offered it to buyers. The other top systems include monitored security (77 percent), home theater (74 percent), central vacuum (74 percent), and multiroom audio (69 percent).

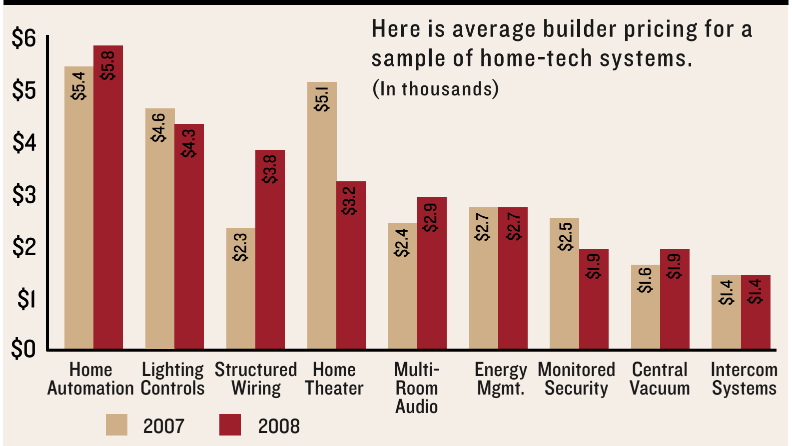
For the last four years, roughly half of builders said they actually installed structured wiring in new homes and 15 percent said they sold multiroom audio systems. The share of builders installing home theater technology is up dramatically in CEA's study, from 10 percent in 2007 to 18 percent last year. Koenig says the jump reflects not only demand from buyers who plan to spend more time at home, but also price drops in displays and other systems.

For his nine-lot subdivision, Corbo says he's been crunching the numbers in order to build homes pre-wired for 5:1 surround sound in the family room. "From there, we'll try and upsell the screens, speakers, and receiver," he says.

In his spec homes, the standard structured wiring package includes six plug-in points. But in his starter homes, there will be only two or three. At the high end, Corbo includes six zones of multiroom audio; in his starter homes, there will likely be two. But the important thing, according to Corbo, is that his company continues to sell homes with technology packages.

"We really believe in this," he says. "We almost compromised, but when we looked at it all again, we were able to bring enough [technology] to the table to help us differentiate and turn a little profit."—*B.G.*

HOME-TECH INSTALLATION PRICING



SOURCE: CEA "7TH ANNUAL STATE OF THE BUILDER TECHNOLOGY MARKET STUDY"

Over the Wire

Builders will like Gefen's fiber-based extension solution that uses a single fiber optic cable to transmit high-definition multimedia interface (HDMI) v1.3 video up to 1,600 feet in length to support the entire scope of the expanded HDMI format. The system uses fiber optic modules made by Omron, Gefen's partner in the venture, to enable long-distance delivery of HDMI over a single fiber optic cable. Gefen's HDMI over Fiber Extender comes with a 6-foot HDMI cable, sender and receiver units, and power supply to drive performance. List price is $3,999.

Digital Waters

Epitomizing what the company refers to as "sensual minimalism," Grohe USA's new digitally controlled Ondus faucet offers visually dramatic, fluid designs that have been picked by the red dot design award as the "Best of the Best" design. The Ondus features an icon-based, backlit interface that allows users to preset water temperature and flow rate. The Ondus and related products have their own microsite at www.groheondus.com.

DO YOU HAVE A TECH STORY?

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NAHB BRIEFS

More Help

The federal tax credits for energy-efficient home improvements are expected to generate an estimated $6 billion in remodeling work by the end of 2010, according to federal officials. The Internal Revenue Code Section 25C for existing homes, which expired at the



end of 2007, was reinstated as part of the economic rescue package passed by the Bush administration last fall. Under the stimulus legislation signed by President Obama, the percentage of the cost and lifetime cap have been tripled to 30 percent and $1,500 respectively and the deadline for installing them has been extended through the end of 2010.

Check Point

House and Senate lawmakers finally introduced the long-awaited and confusingly named Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) on March 10, officially kicking off what will be an extremely ▶

NATIONAL BEAT

NEWS FROM HOUSING'S GROUND ZERO ■ EDITED BY CLAIRE KOLTKO



RICHARD BORGE

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Shout It Out

It's time to tout the benefits of the increased first-time home buyer tax credit.

By now, you're no doubt aware of the $8,000 first-time home buyer tax credit that was included in the landmark economic stimulus legislation enacted by Congress and signed into law in mid-February.

While we were disappointed that the tax credit wasn't larger and wasn't extended to all buyers, we were pleased that—unlike the 2008 tax credit—it is a real credit and doesn't have to be repaid.

Considering that about 40 percent of all home purchasers each year are first-time home buyers, the tax credit has the potential to trigger considerable activity in the housing market. In fact, the NAHB's housing economists estimate that it could generate an additional 160,000 home sales. To this end, the NAHB is doing a great deal to promote use of the tax credit to generate business for members—both directly and indirectly—and to help get the housing market and the economy back on track.



JOE ROBSON
Chairman of the Board, NAHB
Washington, D.C.

One of our most important efforts is www.federalhousingtaxcredit.com. This comprehensive Web site provides basic information about the tax credit and has a detailed question and *(see page 64)*

answer section. It also includes a video interview with Rob Dietz, the NAHB's director of tax issues, who explains how the credit works.

This Web site is a great resource for prospective buyers and can also help trade-up buyers understand how to best market their homes. In addition to providing information about the tax credit, it summarizes other measures in the legislation that affect small businesses, including an extension of the net operating loss carryback period from two years to five years for businesses with average gross receipts of no more than $15 million over the previous three years.

Federalhousingtaxcredit.com tallied a record 844,000 visits in February, a strong indication that prospective buyers are seriously considering the tax credit and that it has the potential to generate home sales and help revitalize the housing market.

At www.nahb.org/taxcreditmaterials, we have assembled a comprehensive package of materials that members and HBAs can use to promote the tax credit. One of the most popular is a four-page brochure, "Opportunity Knocks for Home Buyers," which is newly revised to reflect the tax credit provisions in the economic stimulus bill. The publication also includes examples of typical federal income tax savings during the first five years of homeownership and a general discussion of the benefits of owning a home. Many associations and individual members have reprinted this publication for use in their sales offices and at events such as home shows.

The other materials available for promoting use of the tax credit include print ads that builders can customize to promote their own communities, a consumer flyer, Web banners, and background information including a Q&A and a fact sheet.

Among the resources for HBAs are a print ad for use in member newsletters, a video public service announcement, talking points on the tax credit, and radio spot scripts on the credit.

I hope you and your HBAs will use these resources to help promote home buying and use of the tax credit. It's a tool that has the potential to stimulate sales and help breathe some life back into the housing market, but only if buyers use it. **B**

THE NAHB RESEARCH CENTER CORNER

Seal of Approval

The new Green Approved product seal lets the green shine through.

The NAHB Research Center recently introduced its Green Approved product seal of approval. The Green Approved mark provides third-party evidence that building products meet specific scoring criteria for homes seeking certification to the National Green Building Standard, a consensus-developed standard that was approved by ANSI in January 2009.

With third-party documentation and approval by the NAHB Research Center, the Green Approved mark indicates that a building product contributes to compliance of specific green practices for National Green Building Certification to the National Green Building Standard. (Green Approved products are not evaluated for points per the NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines.) Green Approved products carry a certificate from the Research Center that identifies the specific sections of the National Green Building Standard under which the products can earn points. The Green Approved mark helps bridge the gap between manufacturers who make products that are appropriate for green building applications and builders and designers who want to use them. Green Approved products can be found through links on the Green Scoring Tool at www.nahbgreen.org as well as on the Green Approved products Web site (www.greenapprovedproducts.com).

Michael Luzier, president of the NAHB Research Center, believes Green Approved products will have a significant impact on the future of National Green Building Certification. "Having these products pre-approved for points will streamline and enhance the certification process for everyone involved, without compromising the integrity of the certification process at all. Builders and designers will be able to more easily specify products they know are eligible for certification points; verifiers will not have to seek further documentation of these products' eligibility; and manufacturers will know their Green Approved products are being seen by builders who are serious about providing green certified homes to their customers."

Manufacturers interested in having products become Green Approved should send a message via the Contact Us form on the NAHB Green Web site or call the National Green Building Program Hotline at 877-NAHB-GRN.

NAHB BRIEFS

contentious debate over the future of the workplace secret ballot. EFCA would allow labor unions to organize themselves into a union by collecting the signatures of at least half of a workplace's employees, without holding a secret ballot vote. The process requires publicly posting the names of everyone who signs the cards, allowing union officials, employers, and coworkers to know who signed and who didn't.

On the Move

In a unique marketing campaign, John Wieland, CEO and founder of John Wieland Homes, is traveling in a green Winnebago emblazoned with a "Get Housing Moving!" banner, touring his five markets. He's vowed to continue his tour until the company sells 101 homes. On a person-to-person basis, he is also working to convey the message that housing is critical to staging an



economic recovery and that now is an opportune time to buy, with mortgage rates and prices running near all-time lows.

Teaming Up

The Federal Reserve and the Treasury have come together to offer a bold new experiment.

During his "Semiannual Monetary Policy Report" to Congress in late February, Federal Reserve chairman Ben Bernanke said that "there is a reasonable prospect that the current recession will end in 2009 and that 2010 will be a year of recovery." But he stressed that this pattern will materialize if, and only if, actions taken by the administration, Congress, and the Federal Reserve "are successful in restoring some measure of financial stability." Aye, there's the rub!

Bernanke's comments came two weeks after Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner presented the outline of the administration's Financial Stability Plan to the world. It's fair to say that financial markets were deeply disappointed and highly skeptical of what Geithner had to say, particularly with respect to components dealing with fresh rounds of capital injections into banks and an ill-defined public/private effort to get toxic assets off of banks' balance sheets.

BRING ON THE TALF

The markets paid little initial attention to another key element discussed by Geithner, the Consumer and Business Lending Initiative. Perhaps that's because it wasn't truly new but was built upon a Fed-designed Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility (TALF) that had already been developed under emergency powers but had not yet been implemented.

On March 3, the Federal Reserve and the Treasury jointly announced the launch of the TALF. This effort recognizes that the Fed's massive efforts to provide liquidity to banks and primary securities dealers have not been able to overcome the reluctance of financial intermediaries to extend and hold credit when concerns about capital, asset quality, and credit risk are dominant.

The TALF provides financing directly to private investors in credit markets that are considered key to economic recovery. The TALF seeks to revive lending that previously had been financed through major components of the private asset–backed securities (ABS) markets. The ABS markets were major credit channels as recently as 2007, but have been virtually shuttered since the worsening of the financial crisis last October.

The TALF initially will make up to $200 billion in loans to investors to support their purchase of targeted asset-backed securities. The ABS must be high quality and must be backed by recently originated loans. At the outset, TALF loans will have a maturity of three years. The plan states that the interest rates on TALF loans "will be set with a view to providing borrowers an incentive to purchase newly issued eligible ABS at a yield spread higher than in more normal market conditions but lower than in the highly illiquid market conditions that have prevailed during the recent credit market turmoil."



The TALF initially will focus on the ABS markets for auto loans, credit card loans, student loans, and SBA-guaranteed small-business loans. Plans are underway to accommodate other asset types, possibly including commercial and private-label mortgage-backed securities.

BREAK WITH THE PAST

The TALF goes well beyond standard measures of monetary policy. This facility combines Federal Reserve liquidity with capital provided by the Treasury, and the facility effectively substitutes public (Federal Reserve) for private balance sheet capacity in a period of sharp deleveraging and risk aversion in the private sector.

The key virtue of the TALF program in the current context is that it allows the Fed to push down rates and ease credit conditions in a targeted range of markets, despite the fact that the federal funds rate is essentially at its lower bound and cannot be pushed lower.

The TALF is a bold and highly complicated experiment. The Fed and the Treasury expect the program to eventually stimulate up to $1 trillion in new credit creation as a range of ABS markets are revived. The TALF may prove to be key to financial stability and economic recovery by late this year at little or no cost to taxpayers.

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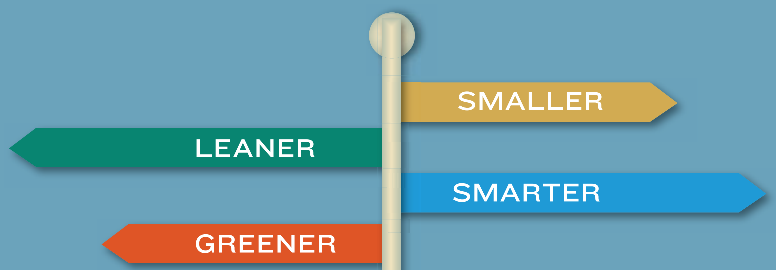


NEW DIRECTION

In desperate times, four companies take the road less traveled.

BY JOHN CAULFIELD AND PAT CURRY

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL AUSTIN



As they wait anxiously for the economy to improve, many builders—the solvent ones, anyway—are preparing their companies for the next recovery cycle. What's common among them are their objectives to become some combination of smaller, leaner, smarter, and/or greener. And how they move in any of these directions is causing fundamental shifts in their products, their processes, and, in some cases, the very personality of their companies.

Our annual Field Report focuses this year on four companies that are willing to see themselves differently, even if that's meant fighting internal and external resistance to change, and to carve out new destinies. Meritage Homes went from building luxury homes to targeting entry-level buyers with houses 20 percent to 25 percent smaller; Jagoe Homes is pushing its trades and employees to work in tandem to find process improvements and cost savings; Meeting Street Communities is focusing on affordable urban infill townhouses in communities that feature genuine lifestyle amenities and is increasing its productivity with panelized construction; and Artistic Homes eventually expects to be building net–zero-energy homes exclusively, although its officers admit getting there won't be easy.

Understanding what their customers want and what they'll pay for, and delivering products efficiently and profitably are the goals driving each of these builders. They are all hoping the paths they've chosen can lead them through the bad times and position them competitively for the good.—*J.C.*

FIELD REPORT

2009

SMALLER

SMALL ADVANTAGE

Meritage Homes shelves its larger plans in favor of more compact, affordable models.

BY PAT CURRY

LAST JANUARY, STEVE HILTON, CEO of Scottsdale, Ariz.–based Meritage Homes, told housing analysts that his company had made several changes to boost sales in this dismal housing market. The most evident change can be found in its products.

"Our roots are more in the move-up to luxury housing market," Hilton says. "It's very hard to get a non-conventional loan from a traditional bank—it takes a much larger down payment and there are appraisal issues, so there are very few of those buyers out there today. Most buyers are entry-level or first move-up. They're not willing to pay for some of the things we were offering in the past. Price is extraordinarily important. People are much more value-conscious. We've had to adapt our product to offer the best price and value possible."

To do that, Meritage made a strategic decision to shrink square footage. Since last summer, Meritage has introduced 52 new models in its markets in California, Arizona, Nevada, Colorado, Texas, and Florida. Its plans previously ranged from 1,200 to 4,500 square feet. Today they still start at 1,200 but have less architectural detailing and stop at 3,000 square feet.

"It was a pretty big shift, and we had to convince our leaders the market had shifted," Hilton says. "We got buy-in from all of them and went out and started executing."

While it might seem like Meritage is altering its business plan, COO Steve Davis says it's actually returning to a time "when 1,500 to 2,000 square feet was the best seller. It wasn't until 100 percent financing became available that people went for 3,000 square feet. Until that financing came in, this was our sweet spot."



SCALING BACK: Meritage reduced its largest homes by 40 percent.

COURTESY MERITAGE HOMES

TAKING ON FORECLOSURES

All of Meritage's new models are designed to pursue first-time and first move-up buyers and to compete head to head with resales and foreclosures. Like most builders, Meritage has found that competition to be merciless.

"We have a couple of employees who bought houses in Phoenix in 2005 and 2006," Hilton says, by way of illustration. "One bought a $500,000 house. The same house sold on her street in foreclosure for $170,000. Another bought a $700,000 house and had a house on the same street sell in foreclosure for $350,000. We're still building in those neighborhoods."

While smaller, the new house plans are designed to respond to the features that today's home buyers value including open gathering spaces and bedroom count, Davis says. By reducing or eliminating formal living and dining rooms and breakfast nooks and replacing them with country kitchens, "you started having more space you could utilize for bedrooms," Davis says. "You could have four bedrooms in 1,700 square feet or six bedrooms in 2,600 square feet. The houses are much more functional. It used to be that you had to go to 3,000 square feet to get the extra bedrooms. Buyers commented favorably on that."

To save money and increase efficiency, Meritage assigned the redesign of all the plans to one architect, Michael Woodley of Santa Ana, Calif.

"In the West—Arizona, California, and Nevada—the architectural preferences are very similar between the states," Hilton says. "We could use a lot of similar product, as opposed to designing independent product like we did before. Now we can benchmark our costs between the three states. We can really understand our costs better. That will help us



A CONSISTENT LOOK: To achieve cost savings and efficiency, Meritage handed off the redesign of its house plans to one architect.

COURTESY MERITAGE HOMES

deliver a lower-priced home and a more profitable home for Meritage."

In addition to the smaller square footage and streamlining the plans to make them more efficient to build, several factors have helped the company reduce its costs. Labor and material costs have come down by about a third, Hilton says, and land costs have dropped by as much as two-thirds from what they were during the peak of the housing boom. The result is the ability to lower prices by as much as 40 percent to 50 percent and still make a profit.

"For us, it's pretty stunning," Hilton says.

Since the new products are still very new, there aren't volumes of sales data yet to show how the strategy will pay off, but early results are encouraging. In its Orlando, Fla., market, square footages were cut in 90 percent of its communities, and costs were cut by about a third. The average sales price was lowered by about 22 percent to roughly $200,000. In that market, 57 houses were sold in 2008's fourth quarter, which is more than in previous quarters, Hilton says.

"We've had to adapt our product to offer the best price and value possible."—Steve Hilton, CEO, Meritage Homes

Davis says the company has had no pushback from its buyers on the smaller floor plans. "In most cases, you're not talking to someone coming out of a 5,000-square-foot house," he says. "They're coming out of apartments. ... The sales speak to that. In places where we've introduced it, we're seeing sales improve."

They've also been much more consistent across communities, Davis says, "versus one hot community."

MINING THE DATA

An integral part of Meritage's shift to smaller products was developing relevant data from which to design product that would appeal to the new target buyers. Phillipe Lord, head of Meritage's research department, closely tracks foreclosure and resale transactions in each of its markets.

"We created a more comprehensive data platform to break down those transactions at a detailed level as they move through the market," Lord says. "We can see, specifically to a community market area, what people are buying in the whole competitive set, not just new homes."

The biggest surprise in the data, Lord says, was "how relevant the resale has become. In some markets, we're seeing some of the lowest new-home permit levels in decades. The resale market is capturing north of 90 percent of the market. It's usually more of a 70-30 split [between resale and new construction]."

In the Phoenix market alone, the resale volume is averaging over 5,000 transactions a month.

"That's the encouraging thing for us," Hilton says. "Five thousand buyers is a lot if you can figure out how to compete against that. Why buy used when you can buy new for a very comparable price?"

LEANER

FIELD REPORT

2009

LEAN ON THEM

Kentucky's Jagoe Homes gets its trade partners involved in finding ways to reduce waste.

BY JOHN CAULFIELD

Jagoe Homes of Owensboro, Ky., was three for three last year in hitting its strategic targets. It made money despite home sales being off by at least 40 percent in its six markets in Kentucky and Indiana. It grew by expanding into Bowling Green, Ky., and by taking over the market position of a custom builder in its home base who retired. And the builder lowered its debt.

Last year had some bumps, too: Jagoe's closings dropped off to 199 homes, from 226 in 2007 and 300 in 2005. For the first time the builder trimmed its staff, to 39 people from 62. But Jagoe Homes is weathering the recessionary storm better than most builders. "We knew we were going to have to reduce our size, but it went beyond cutting people," says co-owner Scott Jagoe. "We had to formulate our plans around our strategy."

Scott and brother Bill have long been committed to making their company an efficient operator. A process mapping software program called Dynami they've been using for 10 years helps streamline workflow by identifying non–value-added activities in construction, sales, and management. And a meeting last May that Jagoe's associates had with subcontractors and suppliers produced a laundry list of lean initiatives whose implementation is shaving significant dollars off of the builder's costs.

"As my brother says, never waste a crisis, and that's what we've been in," says Scott.

"If I see something in the field I don't like, I can post it to the project manager and track how he handles it."—Bill Jagoe, principal, Jagoe Homes

CLOSING THE LOOP

To describe how things are different at his company, Bill remembers back to the late 1980s, when Jagoe Homes' superintendents would often ignore construction schedules in favor of their to-do lists. Dynami changed all that. It produced a workflow component, updated daily, which "put the whole company in a kind of fishbowl. If I see something in the field I don't like, I can post it to the project manager and track how he handles it. Dynami closes the management loop." The software also singled out 156 time-wasting activities, such as redundant checking of tasks. "When you go to Wal-Mart and have something rung up, they don't get the sales manager. But our sales managers were signing off on every contract," says Bill.

Jagoe Homes felt comfortable enough with its workflow improvements that it eliminated its vice president of construction position. The brothers admit it took some coaxing to get their sales team to believe that a computer program could track the process of selling a house given such variables as the relative sophistication of different buyers. Tracking production, on the other hand, was a piece of cake and is



MAPPED OUT: Jagoe's computer system identifies non-value activities in its operations.

COURTESY JAGOE HOMES



LEAN TEAM: Jagoe wants its associates to work with trade partners to find cost savings.

COURTESY JAGOE HOMES

embraced by Jagoe's supers and crews who now know what work lies ahead of them and aren't constantly in catch-up mode. "It gave them back their Saturdays," says Scott.

The foundation that Dynami laid allowed Jagoe Homes to look for ways to trim its sails when business conditions faltered. Last May, it hired the consulting firm TrueNorth, which specializes in helping builders get leaner without beating their trade partners into submission. TrueNorth conducted a Lean Builder Blitz, which included 28 of Jagoe Homes' trades and suppliers and a dozen associates—including Bill and Scott—who now constitute the company's "lean team." That meeting generated 206 lean initiatives for eliminating waste and getting rid of those things "customers won't pay for," says Scott. (See "Step by Step," right.)

For example, a trash hauler who picks up refuse at Jagoe's jobsites told the builder his job was taking longer than it should because subs parked their trucks in front of the dumpsters. Clearing those areas saves the collector time, which in turn saves Jagoe $7,000 per year. A drywall hanger told the builder it was ordering too many 12-foot boards, which he often cut, dumping the excess. By buying more 8-foot boards, Jagoe saves $70,000 per year.

The blitz resolved problems between trades without increasing cycle times or diluting quality. It also helped reduce Jagoe Homes' cost-site variances to one-hundredth of 1 percent. "We're as tight as we can be right now," says Bill. The brothers estimate that by executing these lean initiatives, Jagoe Homes has cut construction costs by $3,600 per house.

FORMING A LEAN COUNCIL

Jagoe Homes is on track to close 232 homes this year. But Bill and Scott say their company has only scratched the surface to become a truly lean operation. "I read somewhere it takes 10 years," says Bill.

Jagoe Homes' plans for 2009 revolve around sustaining this forward movement. The company will hold a re-blitz for subs and suppliers that didn't attend the first one and a separate blitz for employees. Sometime this year, Jagoe Homes will form a trade council, comprised of associates, suppliers, and contractors, that will work on its own to monitor the builder with an eye toward smoking out waste, streamlining its operations, and lowering costs.

The brothers would like nothing better than for Jagoe Homes to become more like Toyota, which Bill says evaluates 1 million lean initiatives every year from its employees and trade partners. "Lean comes from the people," says Scott. *(see page 76)*

STEP BY STEP

Last May, a dozen Jagoe Homes associates, including its two principals, met with 28 trades and suppliers in a lean builder blitz that came up with: → **206 LEAN INITIATIVES** → The company broke down those initiatives into categories its owners call **THE SEVEN TENETS OF LEAN**

Transportation, Motion of People, Waiting, Overproduction, Overprocessing, Inventory, Defects

+ Jagoe then prioritized the initiatives by how much they would save and how long they'd take to achieve:

MORE than $20,000 in savings in less than 60 days	**MORE** than $20,000 in savings in more than 60 days
LESS than $20,000 in savings in less than 60 days	**LESS** than $20,000 in savings in more than 60 days

= Jagoe Homes reduced its direct construction costs by **$3,600** per house.

SMARTER

FIELD REPORT

2009

SAVVY CHOICES

A Charlotte builder combines traditional design with the efficiencies of panelization.

BY PAT CURRY

JOE ROY, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER of Charlotte, N.C.–based Meeting Street Communities, has been in love with traditional neighborhoods his entire life. Growing up in Baton Rouge, La., he spent his childhood "wandering through the Garden District," an upscale neighborhood listed on the National Register of Historic Places. "I couldn't tell you why I enjoyed it, but I did," he says. "Every little street had something to keep me going to the next block."

As he grew older, he got the same feeling when he visited great traditional neighborhoods in places such as New Orleans, Charleston, S.C., Boston, and Washington.

Armed with a degree in construction management from Louisiana State University, Roy spent his early career doing estimating and cost accounting for a large design/build firm. He worked on manufacturing facilities for Dupont and Westinghouse, developing product prototypes and designing tight management systems.

In 1996, Roy followed his heart and his ambition to open his own business. With a partner, he started the residential development firm that would become Meeting Street. They had two communities underway and contracts for several presales. Roy ran the company. His partner, custom home builder David Simonini, was its front man.

"He loved the limelight, loved the attention," Roy recalls. But Simonini's personality got the better of him. He was indicted and served 33 months in federal prison for money laundering and fraud before being released last year. "He nearly took me down with him," says Roy. "We lost all our sales when he filed for bankruptcy. But we had a great concept and a great product. I bought him out, fired every attorney and CPA, and ended up with three or four employees that had been there from the start. We decided to scale it down, make a small custom home, and make it affordable."

PRECISION PAY-OFF: Panelization allows Meeting Street to order countertops and cabinets without measuring because there's no variation in the walls.





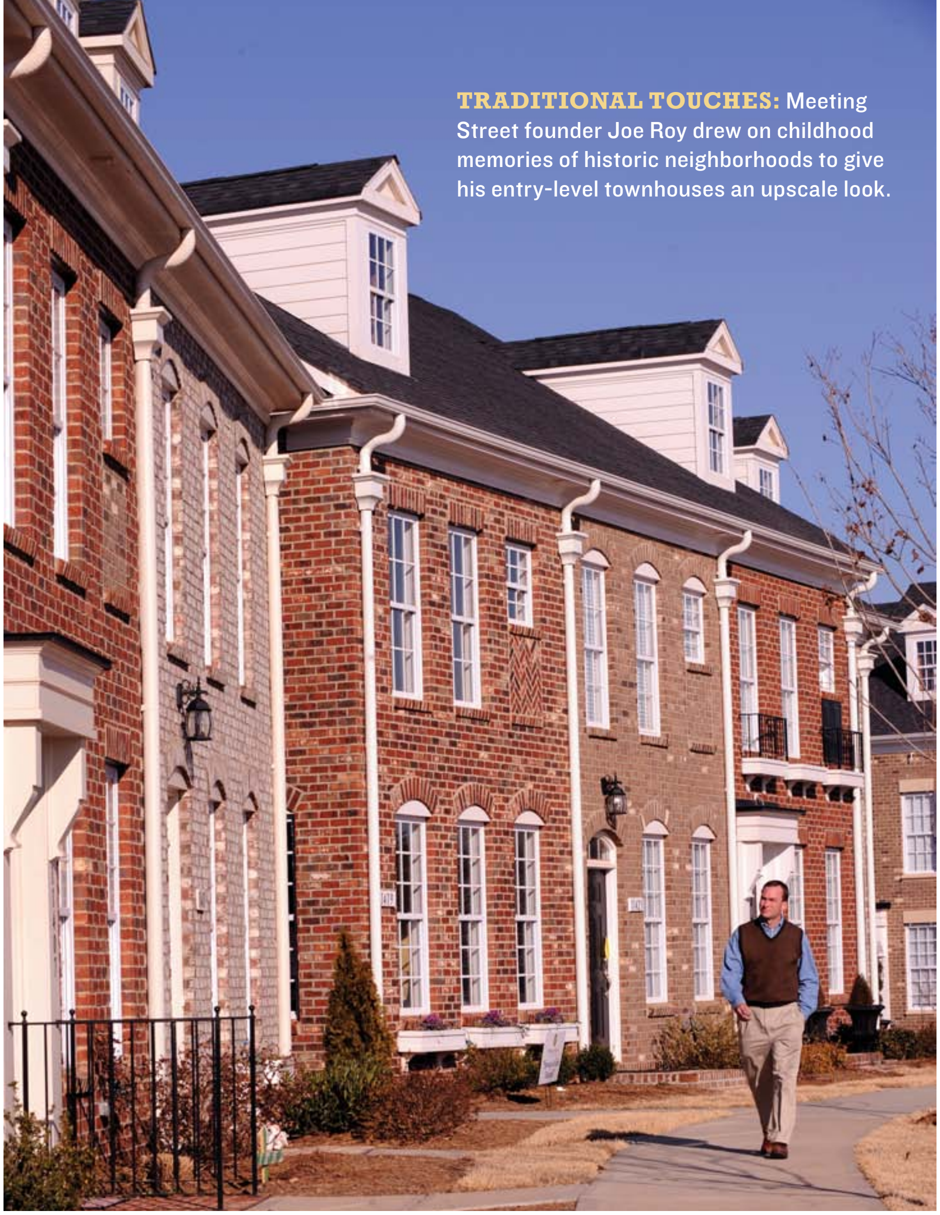
ECONOMICAL INFILL

Roy did that by combining his love of traditional neighborhoods with the skills he'd developed as an estimator and cost accountant. The company's core product is affordable urban infill townhomes. They account for 80 percent of Meeting Street's sales. The other 20 percent is made up of luxury townhomes, single-family detached, and live/work units.

"Our amenities are not swimming pools, clubhouses, and big lots," says Robert Swaringen, who oversees sales and land acquisition for Meeting Street's divisions in Charlotte and Charleston. "They're coffee shops and grocery stores. Our buyer likes to come home from work, park the car, and walk to dinner. Towns know that and call us." The typical buyer, Swaringen says, is a woman between the ages of 28 and 33. Most are single; few have children.

"We did focus groups with Realtors and asked about pricing," Roy says. "If they said they thought the units could sell for $200,000, we said, 'How about if we priced them from $148,000 to *(see page 78)*

PHOTOS: JOHN CURRY



TRADITIONAL TOUCHES: Meeting Street founder Joe Roy drew on childhood memories of historic neighborhoods to give his entry-level townhouses an upscale look.

$175,000?' They said they could sell them all day long at that price. That's what we wanted." Prices for the townhomes actually start as low as $135,000.

Roy bought his plans from a local architect "who didn't think they were worth anything. I bought his live/work plans, too." Roy chose a simple box for the structure of the house, rejecting the intricate roof lines that were popular on products built by national builders that had entered Charlotte.

"I thought that if we took the extra details off, we could put in nice windows and doors," Roy says. "That's it. We make them as affordable as we can with high-quality materials."

By cutting that cost, he could spend extra money to add touches of architectural styling and to use good-quality, low-maintenance materials for the exteriors. It keeps the neighborhoods looking nice for years and reduces his warranty costs.

"Developers drive through the neighborhoods and say the townhomes look great," Roy says. "That's created more opportunities for us."

He invested upfront to fully integrate the company's systems from prospect tracking to warranty service, which eliminates redundancies and turf wars between purchasing and accounting that drove him to distraction at Dupont and Westinghouse. "If we had paper files here, our office would be twice as big," Roy says.

"Developers drive through the neighborhoods and say the townhomes look great. That's created more opportunities for us."—Joe Roy, president, Meeting Street Communities

PANEL DISCUSSION

He hired a former Pulte builder, Scott Dirkschneider, to incorporate efficiencies that are common at national builders. But he also told Dirkschneider that he wanted to do panelized construction.

"Scott said they'd tried it at Pulte, and it didn't work," Roy says. "I wanted to try it anyway. Panels are quicker, easier, and more efficient. We save money because every house is the same. Our window heights and sizes are always the same. The door frames are always the same. We don't have six dumpsters of trash on the jobsite. We don't have lumber shrinkage."

Meeting Street's purchasing manager Amy Whidden, initially a skeptic about panelization, has become a convert. "There's less error and less waste," she says. "We see exact efficiencies. Yes, it costs us $1,100 more per house to do it, but it might allow us to do 20 more starts a year. A builder would spend a day on a framing check with stick-built. We do it in three hours."

She now buys panels as if she were buying loose lumber. "We used to lock in prices for a year," she says. "Now we buy it as a commodity. We've got all the efficiencies of panels with the benefit of the market volatility."

She also does takeoffs so she knows "exactly what to buy if we can't get panels. If a panel guy quits [the business], we have a plan B." In fact, of all the processes the company has in place, Whidden says panelization has made the biggest impact on its ability to build smarter.

"If we went back to loose lumber, we'd have theft, short shipments, and variances," she says. "The townhomes may vary {by} $400, plus or minus. If there's a bigger variance, it's the land."

This level of accuracy in projecting its costs allows Meeting Street to meet its goal of building quality homes at an extremely affordable price point, which in turn lets it reach first-time buyers.

"Our buyer is a discriminating buyer," Roy says. "They're not shopping at Wal-Mart. Our pricing goal is to make a good profit. I never had an ambition of making a ridiculous profit." *(see page 80)*

JOHN CURRY



GREENER

FIELD REPORT

2009

EFFICIENCY EXPERTS

New Mexico's Artistic Homes has taken a long journey to become a green builder.

BY JOHN CAULFIELD

LAST YEAR WAS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY of Artistic Homes' decision to turn itself into a builder of energy-efficient homes. The culmination of that decision (so far) can be found in Rio Rancho, N.M., where last fall Artistic, which is based in Albuquerque, completed its first net–zero-energy house.

Along the way, Artistic's owners have learned—sometimes painfully—that green building requires constant training and supervision of personnel, subs, and suppliers, because the danger of slipups is ever present. (It even happened on its zero-energy house, where one of its long-time contractors made some mistakes.) "It's a top-to-bottom process, and we're still in that process," says Tom Wade, one of Artistic's principals.

Life was simpler when Artistic was an entry-level builder whose main concern was holding down costs as it put up 800 units annually. In 1998, though, its owners met with Building America, the Department of Energy's program that promotes energy-efficient construction. Something clicked, recalls Wade. "What they were saying made sense to us."

The builder's metamorphosis, though, was another matter. "It was like a lobotomy," laughs Wade. Getting subs on board meant almost daily in-field training. Going green also necessitated "a tremendous change" in building products. Back then, HVAC units in Albuquerque homes were mostly evaporative swamp coolers, "and overnight, we're changing to refrigerated air," says Wade. Artistic's green homes also are framed with 2x6s instead of 2x4s, insulated with blown-in foam rather than fiberglass batts, with ducts running from the ground floor instead of from the attic.

These rudimentary green building features add $3,500 to the price of a house. "At the time, our homes were selling for $75,000, so that was a lot." And market conditions weren't moving in Artistic's direction. National builders rolled into New Mexico and sated buyers' appetites for big houses. As a green builder, there were certain design preferences that Artistic could not accommodate, such as 15-foot-high ceilings in the foyers. Consequently, green limited the builder's customer base, and its annual production fell below 600 units.

With so much construction going on in the market at that time, "we never knew what crews were going to show up," says Wade. Quality control flew out the window, causing a rift in the Wade family that led to Tom's two brothers leaving the company in 2003 and 2004. "It took every ounce of energy to stick with this," says Wade.

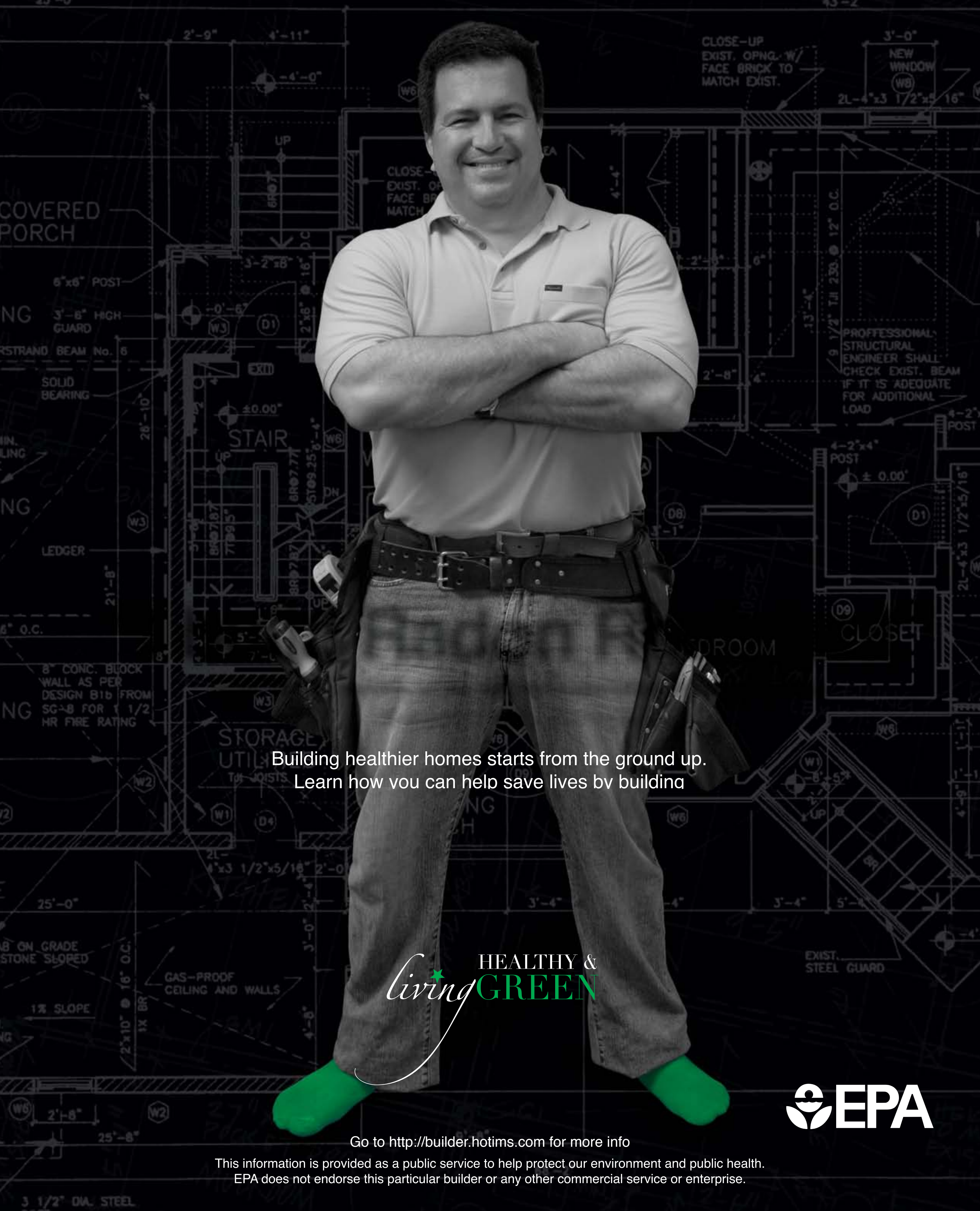
RAISING THE BAR

The following year, Tom's father Jerry, Artistic's owner, sensed correctly that the housing bubble was about to pop. He retrieved all of the company's land commitments, which at the time numbered around 2,000 lots. Artistic had a backlog of more than 550 contracts "and our primary focus was to build them efficiently," says Wade. *(see page 82)*



MOVING TO ZERO: An improved version of its net–zero-energy model in Rio Rancho, N.M., is what Artistic Homes expects to be building and selling exclusively in the future.

COURTESY ARTISTIC HOMES





The company brought in consultants from Building Science Corp. and other organizations to help refine its construction practices. Artistic set benchmarks, such as a home energy rating (HERS) of between 65 and 70 for all of its new houses. And it affiliated with the DOE's Energy Star program and the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED-H certification program.

Around the same time, New Mexico's legislators were crafting the Sustainable Building Tax Credit, applicable to homes built after Oct. 31, 2007 that met LEED-H Silver criteria for greenness and performance. Artistic Homes is well-positioned to promote the credit, which for its buyers can be as much as $10,600. A greener house is still a tough sell in Albuquerque, where buyers think about square footage first. But Artistic has had better luck in towns such as Hobbs, Roswell, and Artesia, N.M., whose economies rely on oil, gas, or mining, and whose buyers seem more aware of an efficient home's benefits. "They don't want to hear about carbon footprints, but they do want stable utility bills," observes Wade.

Artistic Homes' long-term goal is for 100 percent of its houses to be zero energy. The 1,666-square-foot model it built in Rio Rancho has a base HERS of 56 and was priced at $193,000. In late January, Artistic started its second zero-energy house with upgrades that include a solar heating unit, low-VOC products, and energy recovery ventilators. That house will sell for under $240,000, and Artistic can build a smaller version (in the 1,300-square-foot range) for under $200,000.

"When I go to builder events, it's all gloom and doom. But when I go to ... green events, everyone is positive and excited."—Tom Wade, principal, Artistic Homes

TIGHTER FRAME: Artistic is using 2x6 studs in its energy-efficient construction.

COURTESY ARTISTIC HOMES

IN A HAPPIER PLACE

At the recent International Builders' Show, Artistic Homes was one of three builders to receive the first BASF Builders Challenge Award, recognizing Artistic's efforts to build homes that achieve at least a 70 on the DOE's EnergySmart Home Scale. If only appraisers in New Mexico were as enlightened about the homes' benefits. They may not see the value of green building yet, but Wade feels good about his company's future and projects that Artistic Homes, which finished 100 houses last year, will increase that by at least 50 percent in 2009.

"When I go to builder events, it's all gloom and doom. But when I go to Energy Star and green events, everyone is positive and excited," he says. When the housing demand returns, he's confident that buyers "are going to want a good product that doesn't cost them a lot to maintain." **B**

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The Builder LivingHome is a sustainable show home unveiled at the 2009 IBS Show.

Builder livinghome
2009 SHOWHOME AT IBS
hanley wood

A Show Home That's Worth Revisiting: Inside Builder's LivingHome With Whirlpool Corporation



Yes, the 2009 International Builders' Show® came to a close months ago. But for us, the buzz surrounding this annual event is still very much alive. While a great deal of energy was generated by several new product launches throughout our lineup of brands, there's more to the story.

Standing inside the Las Vegas Convention Center's main hall was the show's not-to-be-missed 2,426-square-foot exhibit: The Builder LivingHome. And standing inside this visionary, high-performance dwelling—several not-to-be-overlooked appliances from Whirlpool Corporation.

In Builders LivingHome, attendees encountered a different kind of exhibit—and a new kind of house. The hybrid construction (combining modular and panelized systems) was built off-site and then assembled on the show floor days before the opening. LivingHome's focus included affordability, contemporary design and, no surprise—green.

Here's a look at the role appliances from our KitchenAid and Whirlpool brands played in helping LivingHome achieve its goals.

KitchenAid® In The Kitchen

For the heart of LivingHome, designers looked to a suite of appliances that matched the structure's high-performance, modern character: KitchenAid® Architect® Series II. The suite offers a complete collection of products for homeowners who love to cook and entertain, and many resource-efficient options are in the mix.

Among several KitchenAid® notables chosen for LivingHome was a sleek, 36" induction cooktop. It's a technology that is 90% energy efficient, while offering ultra-fast heating and precise control. Also included, an ENERGY STAR® qualified side-by-side counter-depth refrigerator, as well as an island-mount ventilation hood featuring a powerful 600 CFM rating for keeping indoor air fresh and clean.





Whirlpool® In The Laundry

Keeping in mind the priorities of performance, looks and efficiency, designers selected the Whirlpool® Duet® Steam Washer and Dryer for LivingHome's laundry. Using the power of steam, homeowners can deal with tough stains in the washer without pre-treating and naturally smooth out wrinkles in the dryer. The ENERGY STAR® qualified washer saves up to 73 percent water and 77 percent energy compared to conventional washers manufactured before 2004.

Demonstrating Sustainability At The Next Level

Every building product found in LivingHome was vetted to ensure the project's green goals were fully realized. Further, the waste-reducing, time-saving construction methods, as well as the home's small environmental footprint, are models with the power to transform the homebuilding industry.

For this reason, being part of LivingHome was an ideal opportunity. Since opening the Whirlpool Corporate Office for Environmental Control in the 1970s, we've championed environmental leadership inside and outside our company. Today, we offer more ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances than any other manufacturer.

Through our support of Builder's LivingHome, we had the opportunity to demonstrate a couple enduring themes. In tightly constructed homes designed to be green, appliances that save energy, conserve water and safeguard indoor air must be part of the equation. And most importantly, when we work together collaboratively, we have the greatest chance to truly make a sustainable difference.





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SURVIVAL OF THE



BOXESA NDP ANELS: Shipped in parts and assembled on the show floor of the Las Vegas Convention Center in just four days, the BUILDER LivingHome was an experiment in modular efficiency.

FITTEST

Small, green, and factory-built, BUILDER's 2009 show home anticipates housing's future.

Builder LivingHome

BY JENNY SULLIVAN
PRODUCTS BY NIGEL F. MAYNARD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES F. WILSON







Builder LivingHome

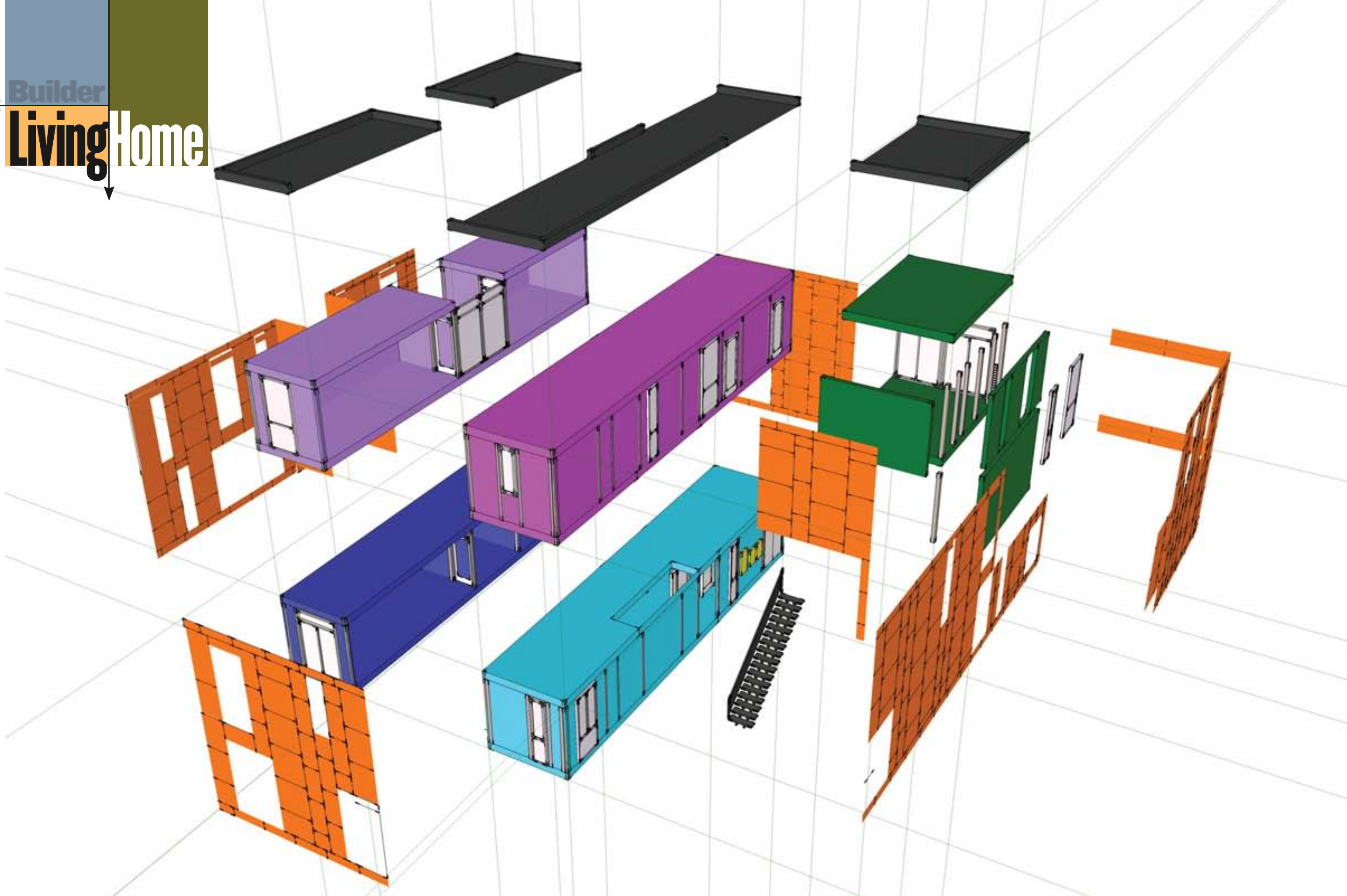
When Charles Darwin developed his theory of evolution, he wasn't thinking about housing, of course. But in this, the year of his 200th birthday, you can't help but imagine that the forces of natural selection are taking their toll on home building.

Few would argue that the industry has reached a point of reckoning. With credit in a virtual lockdown and fossil fuel reserves edging closer to extinction, home builders are adapting to new realities. The pressure is on to provide comfort and luxury in a smaller envelope, to engineer integrated, multifunctional plans and systems, and to build faster, smarter, and more economically. For many, this means rethinking how they've always done things.

Far be it from Builder to preach and not practice, so we upended some of our own timeworn habits in preparation for this year's International Builders' Show. Rather than doing stick-built showcase homes on conventional lots—as has been our tradition for nearly a decade—we partnered with modular builder and developer LivingHomes, the groundbreaking architects at KieranTimberlake Associates, and the eco-minded designers at Color Design Art to create an entirely different animal.

The 2,160-square-foot concept house that made its debut on the trade show floor of the Las Vegas Convention Center in January was factory-built to LEED specifications over the course of roughly three months. Shipped as a suite of modules and panels, it arrived on site nearly 95 percent complete and was stitched together in just four days. Simple, flexible, and sustainable, it is a study in how housing may very well evolve in the not so distant future.

BIGS TRETCH: Spanning 54 feet from end to end, the Builder LivingHome is rather modest but feels plenty spacious thanks to an open floor plan with long sight lines. The designers at Color Design Art used rich accent colors on the end walls to create appealing vistas.



OFA P IECE: Built to California seismic code as well as HUD requirements for transport, the house traveled to the convention center by truck as a series of boxes, plus siding, roof, wall, and infrastructure panels.

ANATOMY OF A HYBRID

There's much to be said for factory prefabrication. Framing and sheathing are not exposed to the elements before they are closed in; sequences are not waylaid by bad weather; and waste is all but eliminated by designing and pre-cutting materials to exacting specifications. Experts wager that cycle times can be shortened by as much as 30 percent, as site prep can be executed at the same time the house is being built. And modular structures are often sturdier than their stick-built counterparts because they must be engineered to withstand transport.

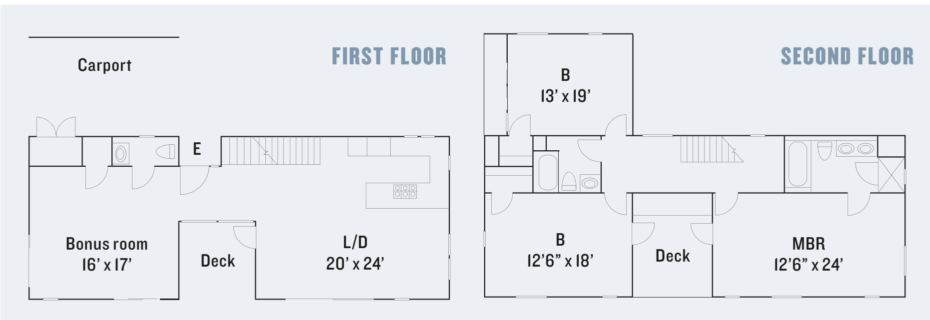
But prefab does have its drawbacks. "Modular construction is performed in a controlled, synchronized environment, so it can be very efficient," says LivingHomes founder and CEO Steve Glenn. "The problem is that shipping [a box full of] air is expensive, and you have to ship out these modules and use big cranes to put them in place. Panels have an advantage over modules in that they can be shipped flat or on their sides. The downside is that panels then become substitutes for framing systems or walls. If you use SIPs, you at least have insulation in place ahead of time, but you still have to run infrastructure, ducting, and mechanicals."

So which is better? Modular or panelized? The Builder LivingHome combines the best of both. Manufactured by Profile Structures, the bulk of the house is made up of four steel-and-wood–framed modules ("mods") stacked in a two-over-two configuration, plus an additional panelized wall, floor, and ceiling system that creates a third bedroom and drive-through carport. And here's where the plan gets really interesting: The biggest energy-consuming areas—the kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, and mechanical room—are organized in a linear sequence along the back wall, and that's no accident. It's a move that allowed the building team to consolidate mechanical ducting, electrical, propane, and plumbing systems into flat smart panels that tilt up to form a spine along that rear wall. The result is a tight, integrated power backbone with no wasted mechanical footage and therefore very little energy lost in transmission.

"The hybrid system we've introduced begins with prefab core modules for the areas that require a lot of skilled labor, such as kitchens and baths, and then introduces new smart panels that integrate the infrastructure," Glenn explains. "It's a flexible system that allows for high-volume fabrication, assembly, and easier transportation." *(see page 92)*



COMEI N: A recessed entry keeps the program simple, yet still creates a sense of place. The arrival sequence is enhanced with a simple shift in cladding colors inside the box.



NICEP RICE: LivingHomes estimates that construction costs for the mod homes in its portfolio are 20 percent to 30 percent less than those for similarly constructed stick-built homes (steel-framed, architect-designed homes with generous glass, decking, and eco-friendly systems and finishes) and take half the time to build.



Structural Support
Behind the walls, an assortment of structural products from iLevel by Weyerhaeuser perform heavy lifting. Walls feature Framer Series lumber that will be straight and true long after it is installed in the home; TJI joists and Structurwood Edge Gold floor panels that create strong, predictable, squeak-free floors; and Parallam PSL beams and columns that are strong and straight. www.ilevel.com.



Under Pressure
Air distribution and indoor air quality management responsibilities are handled by Hi-Velocity System from Energy Saving Products. Flexible enough to provide heating, cooling, filtration, and dehumidification, the system uses small-diameter ducts that work on the principle of pressure rather than air velocity. The system uses an efficient HE EPC motor. www.hi-velocity.com.



Inner Tubes
Instead of copper, Dynamic Plumbing plumbed the house with AquaPEX tubing and ProPEX fittings by Uponor. The flexible crosslinked polyethylene tubing allows tight radius and fewer connections. In addition to resisting scale buildup and corrosion, it dampens rushing water noise and retains more heat. www.uponor-usa.com.



Energy Saver

Lightolier's Xceed compact fluorescent down lights will help the future owners save energy and money. The units are less than 3 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches deep, so they're easy to install, and, unlike other compact fluorescents, they can be used with a dimmer for even more energy savings. www.lightolier.com.



Power Station

A 20-kilowatt, whole-house backup generator and Power Manager LTS transfer switch will provide the home with power if the grid goes down. The unit has a digital control panel, an external main circuit breaker, and a system status LED display. It runs on natural gas or liquid propane and operates quietly. www.generac.com.



Electric Company

The Cutler-Hammer electrical distribution equipment from Eaton Corp. is the lifeblood of the home. Installed by The Krux Co., the list of products include the load center, a surge device to protect appliances and other electronic equipment, and circuit interrupters to protect circuits from hazardous arc-fault trips. Krux also installed low-voltage distribution equipment such as audio and intercom products and structured wiring enclosures. www.eaton.com.



Tanks a Lot

Rinnai's R94LSe tankless system will provide an endless supply of hot water. The Energy Star–certified unit uses a commercial-grade heat exchanger to deliver up to 9.4 gallons per minute. It will supply hot water to five plumbing and appliance outlets simultaneously. www.rinnai.us.

PROPANE
EXCEPTIONAL ENERGY®

Fuel for Thought

The LivingHome team chose propane fuel for its safety and its nontoxic and nonpolluting properties. The Propane Education and Research Council says propane is the most widely used alternative fuel and that the majority of this fuel used in the U.S. is produced domestically. www.buildwithpropane.com.

Pump It Up

A 16 SEER high-efficiency heat pump from Goodman Manufacturing Co. provides energy-efficient heating and cooling for the home. The unit is equipped with a high-performance scroll compressor and uses environmentally friendly R-410A refrigerant. A louvered design and a sound blanket help make the unit quiet. It is coupled with a DMH 900 whole-house air cleaner that removes 99.97 percent of particles down to 0.3 micron. www.goodmanmfg.com.





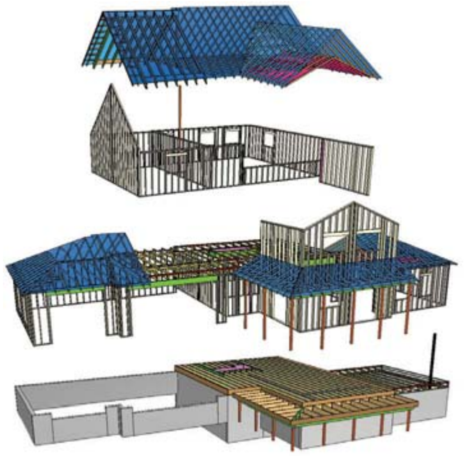
Spin Cycles

You'd expect a sustainable house to have high-efficiency appliances such as the Whirlpool Duet Steam washer and dryer. The Energy Star–rated washer handles tough stains without pre-treating and gets rid of wrinkles and odors. The washer saves up to 73 percent of the water and 77 percent of the energy used by conventional washers manufactured before 2004. www.insideadvantage.com.

(see page 94)


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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY INITIATIVE

From The Forest Floor To An iLevel® Floor, Build Green With iLevel By Weyerhaeuser

Made From A Renewable Resource

As owners and stewards of millions of acres of forestlands, we are committed to sustainable forestry. Each year, we plant more than 100 million seedlings to ensure the availability of forests for future generations. We're also taking sustainability practices beyond our forests. Today, nearly all iLevel products are certified to sustainable forestry standards.

Resource Efficient

We've invested more than four decades of research into developing patented manufacturing technologies to create our engineered wood products. These pioneering technologies have allowed us to take trees that are not large or straight enough to be used for dimensional lumber, and turn them into extremely efficient, predictable building materials. In our lumber mills, we are using cutting-edge manufacturing techniques to optimize each log and piece of lumber—dramatically reducing waste. And, we add zero urea formaldehyde resins to our engineered wood products.

Reduce Waste And Use Only What You Need

iLevel is unique in that we offer a group of products designed to work together as a system. Our software tools incorporate this system approach to help reduce job site waste, and generate accurate material lists through estimating, modeling and design operations, and collaborating processes. Utilizing the predictable performance of our lumber and engineered wood products, our software applications, such as Javelin® Structural Frame design software, and construction techniques, such as NextPhase® Site Solutions, help create an optimized frame.

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iLevel®
by Weyerhaeuser

For More Info:

www.iLevel.com
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Builder LivingHome

GEOGRAPHY OF ANYWHERE

THE TYPICAL SHOW HOME STRATEGY goes something like this: Stake out a prime patch of turf, preferably a corner lot in a pretty neighborhood; load it up with goodies; and entice visitors to "picture yourself here."

The BUILDER LivingHome didn't quite follow the script. Suffice it to say the convention hall was not its final destination. (The prototype was sold following its show tour and will soon be installed in a permanent location in Newport Beach, Calif.) LivingHomes' business model is to provide modular components in a state of near completion to eco-minded builders, developers, and home buyers who develop their own lots. The idea is for customers to envision the hip residences just about anywhere.

"We purposely designed a home that could be situated in any number of environments including a small city lot; a thin, deep lot; a long, wide lot; or a more rural setting," explains design architect Stephen Kieran, whose firm, KieranTimberlake, has developed a suite of kit plans for the LivingHomes portfolio (of which the BUILDER LivingHome is one). "Lots of cities are developing small-lot ordinances. We kept that in mind."

Although site constraints inevitably vary from one location to the next, the house is designed to be more or less plug-and-play, with a host of attributes that minimize the use of fossil fuels. Most rooms cross-ventilate in multiple directions, with a particular emphasis on lateral air flow, and large-scale operable glazing systems are designed to capture prevailing winds. The exteriors are set up to accommodate cantilevered overhangs and solar panels.

The interiors are no less versatile, with virtually no wasted space. Designed with the efficiency of a ship's cabin, each zone inside the house lends itself to multiple functions. The first-floor bonus room, which adjoins a bathroom and can be closed off with a sliding pocket door, might be used as a media room, home office, *(see page 96)*





BITES IZE: The kitchen is small, compact, and good-looking. The open peninsula doubles as a workspace and eating bar and even incorporates a wine fridge.



NEED TO VENT: Big windows and sliding doors on all sides of the house promote cross-ventilation and natural daylighting, thus reducing the need for air conditioning and artificial illumination. The area rug, by Shaw, is made of recyclable materials.

studio, meditation spot, or guest suite.

The open kitchen, dining, and living area, which extends outside onto a spacious patio, is a fluid realm that can easily accommodate small gatherings or large parties. Multiple outdoor connections make the space feel bigger and integrated with its surroundings. "It's a human perceptual thing," Kieran says. "You really don't want to walk into this house, shut the door, and turn on the air conditioning."

Specifying plants and shrubs for the show presentation was a bit of a challenge, notes Robin Pendergrast, owner of Las Vegas–based Lifelike Botanicals. "I selected plant material that would balance well with the contemporary architecture, blend with the living roof, and survive on a convention show floor without the benefit of natural light," she says. "The landscape has a casual and inviting feel that can transition into other urban area settings." *(see page 98)*



GREEN ON GREEN

Landscaper Robin Pendergrast specified plants and trees that would survive a week's worth of artificial light on the show floor and later transfer nicely to a permanent setting. Exteriors were softened with species of yucca, cassia, blue fescue grasses, desert glory, liriope, junipers, artemisia, and blue sage trees, with borders of cedar bark. Inside spaces were accessorized with orchids, bromeliads, succulents, dracaenas, ficus lyrata, and sanseveria. Following the show, all plants and trees were donated to a commercial green building in the area.



Composite Sketch
Made from 43 percent pre-consumer recycled content, Andersen Windows' 100 Series line combines the strength and stability of wood with the low-maintenance features of vinyl. The windows are constructed from a Fibrex structural composite of sawdust and polymer (largely reclaimed from the manufacturing plant). www.andersenwindows.com.



Smooth Approach
Therma-Tru Doors' Smooth-Star fiberglass entry doors are used at the rear entrance to the home and into the mechanical room. The doors are able to withstand dents and dings and have a smooth, paint-ready surface. Stile-and-rail lines create the look of a wood door, and a polyurethane foam core increases energy efficiency. www.thermatru.com.

Walk This Way
Trex's Brasilia composite decking in a Cayenne color has the look of an exotic tropical hardwood, but it will not rot, warp, or need as much maintenance as the real thing. It's made largely from recycled plastic bags and wood waste and has a smooth, soft feel. The installation uses a hidden fastening system. www.trex.com.





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Uponor PEX-a Plumbing Systems — Durable, Efficient, Sustainable … Logical

Using crosslinked polyethylene (PEX) tubing is the superior solution for efficient, sustainable plumbing installations. But don't take our word for it. You can rely on a recent Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that says the adoption of PEX tubing into the California Plumbing Code would be "an environmentally superior action with respect to public health and hazards, water quality and air quality."

This EIR was a full study conducted from October 2007 through December 2008 on PEX tubing and its impact on air quality, water quality, performance, waste, recycling, energy consumption and natural resources with regard to manufacturing processes, installation, use and disposability. Choosing Uponor AquaPEX® provides all the benefits of PEX-a tubing, with a comprehensive offering of supporting products, technical service and support to ensure all your plumbing installations are efficient and successful.

New Products Go One Step Further

Take our new line of lead-free brass transition fittings, for example. These new fittings meet several states' lead-free legislation and exceed the requirements of the United States Safe Drinking Water Act. In fact, combining these fittings with our AquaPEX tubing, our extensive engineered plastic (EP) offering and our ProPEX® Out-of-the-Wall Support System, provides a complete lead-free plumbing solution from the inlet to the faucet.

For another innovative product, check out our new Pre-insulated AquaPEX tubing that features ½" PEX-foam insulation to meet national, state and local energy-code requirements. This product saves green in two ways—both for the environment and for your pocketbook. That's because using Pre-insulated AquaPEX saves up to 37% in installation costs compared to the two-step installation and insulation process.*

At Uponor, we're all about providing solutions for our professional partners in the building industry. For more information about all our sustainable products and systems, visit www.uponor-usa.com or call 1-800-321-4739.

*RS Means Construction Data

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See Through

Contemporary glass doors from The Sliding Door Co. help to separate the family room from the living room. The panels are made with recycled-content anodized aluminum and feature translucent glass panels that slide by upper roller guide and bottom wheels on low-profile floor tracks that are recessed in the floor. Frosted glass is used, but laminated or linen-style is available. www.slidingdoorco.com.

Chef's Choice

The collection of Whirlpool KitchenAid appliances includes an efficient induction cooktop that heats by magnetic energy; a 27-inch Architect Series wall oven with a 1.4-cubic-foot microwave section and a 3.8-cubic-foot convection section; a 27-inch warming drawer; and a side-by-side counter-depth refrigerator. www.insideadvantage.com.





Outside Slider

Sliding patio doors from Andersen Windows bring abundant light into the house and provide easy access to the outdoor area. The doors feature solid wood construction, wood interiors, and low-maintenance aluminum exteriors. www.andersenwindows.com.

Eze Does It

SolarEze solar roof membrane by Suntech Power can expand to suit individual needs and can easily be installed over existing roofs with no structural reinforcement. The low-profile membrane will not ruin the look of the roof line and is wind-load–rated up to 125 miles per hour. www.suntech-power.com.



Dynamic Duo

Kohler's Karbon articulating faucet and 8 Degree sink take center stage in the work area of the kitchen. Made from a combination of carbon and metal, the faucet is designed with moveable joints that allow the spray head to fill large pots and pans, while the stainless steel sink's beveled edges support the accompanying wine glass drying rack. www.us.kohler.com.



Local Color

Sherwin-Williams' Duration Home and environmentally friendly Harmony interior latex paint add color to the house. Harmony has zero volatile organic compounds, and anti-microbial properties protect the surface and inhibit mildew growth, while low-odor Duration features cross-linking technology that creates a washable coating even with saturated colors. www.sherwin-williams.com.



Quartz Right

Stone Etc. installed DuPont Zodiaq quartz surfacing that will withstand the rigors of cooking and day-to-day abuse. Made from at least 50 percent pre-consumer recycled glass, it's nonporous, requires no sealing, and does not promote the growth of bacteria. The team used Warm Taupe from the Terra Collection. www.countertops.dupont.com.



Euro Flash

KraftMaid Cabinetry's ultra hip Venicia cabinets add a sense of drama to the kitchen. Part of the Mirra Collection, the contemporary European-style product has flat-panel, full overlay doors and easy-close drawers. The kitchen features the Carina door style in Onyx Gloss. www.kraftmaid.com.



Grab Bag

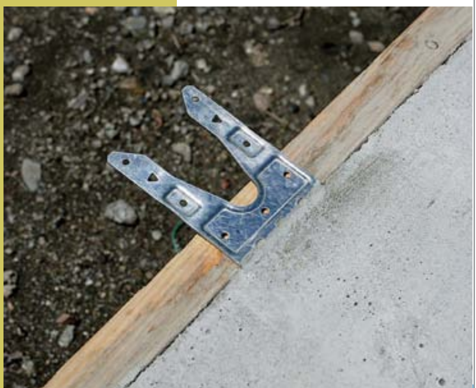
HOPPE's Verona lever design appears in several variations on passage and privacy doors in the house. Made from solid brass, the handle measures almost 5 inches long and has a smooth contoured design. It comes in several finishes, but satin nickel is used here. www.us.hoppe.com.

(see page 100)



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Reduce Cost With Simpson Strong-Tie® Value-Engineered Products

These Simpson Strong-Tie value-engineered products feature easier installation, high load values and lower installed costs.

MASA Mudsill Anchors

The new MASA mudsill anchor offers higher loads, allowing for a one-to-one replacement of 1/2" anchor bolts on 2x and 3x sills and 5/8" bolts on 2x sills. When compared to MAS mudsill anchors, fewer MASA anchors are required since they can be installed as wide as 6 ft. on center, saving installers time and money.

- Pre-drilling sill plates is no longer required to accommodate cast-in-place bolts.
- Unlike anchor bolts, the MASA requires only one tool: a hammer.
- Without anchor bolts, finishing is easier and results in a flatter slab.

ITS Top Flange Joist Hangers

The ITS installs faster and uses fewer nails than any other EWP top flange hanger. Once the hanger is installed on the header, the Strong-Grip™ seat allows the I-joist to simply snap down into place, eliminating the need for joist nails. The unique design saves the installer time and results in the lowest installed cost compared to other hangers.

- Maintains superior download capability—equal to or greater than the ITT for Douglas Fir and all SCL headers.
- Installs with most I-joist sizes and with flange thicknesses from 1 1/8" to 1 1/2".

HDU Holdowns

The HDU holdown offers low deflection, high load values and ease of installation. The HDU installs with Simpson Strong-Tie® Strong-Drive® screws (SDS), which are provided with the holdown. When compared to bolts, SDS screws are faster and easier to install, resulting in time and cost savings.

Learn about these and other Simpson Strong-Tie value-engineered products by visiting www.strongtie.com or calling 1-800-999-5099.



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Builder LivingHome

SIMPLE IS A VIRTUE

On matters of style, LivingHomes abides by the modernist mantra of form follows function. But this less-is-more philosophy is about more than the politics of aesthetics, Glenn says, particularly at a time when climate crisis, budgetary prudence, and energy efficiency are top of mind for both builders and home buyers. The fancy bump-outs, tricky roof forms, and volume spaces that epitomized the trophy homes of the housing boom have more recently come to represent longer construction cycles, costlier labor, and energy inefficiency (more dead space to heat and cool).

"We avoid superfluous materials that are there just for show and that use up extra resources unnecessarily," Glenn says, pointing to the mod home's clean lines and simplified building forms. "Nothing is there just for window dressing. In that regard, the contemporary approach is very relevant."

Glenn himself lives in just such a house (his company's very first prototype) and is betting the streamlined style will prove a winning one with some of today's more coveted buyer segments. These include Gen Y buyers—who are expected to start hitting their prime home buying years around 2012—and "cultural creatives," whom he describes as style-, budget-, and carbon-conscious types who are already driving Priuses and shopping for furniture at places such as Ikea and Design Within Reach. "These are people who really value design, health, and sustainability in the products they buy," he says.

The fact that the Builder LivingHome (and several other modular plan variations on the theme) are production versions of KieranTimberlake's prototype Loblolly House—which one critic went so far as to deem "one of the most innovative and important houses of this century"—holds considerable cachet with design aficionados, he adds. It's the next step up from buying an Eames chair or Philippe Starck light fixture. *(see page 102)*





ALLN ATURAL: Textiles in earthen colors, such as this bedding by Area, complement warm wood tones in the floors, window casements, and solid interior doors.



NOTS TERILE: This softer version of modernism feels warmer and more organic —and, of course, green.

"Loblolly was a custom home with off-site prefab components," Kieran explains. Although there are distinct differences between the original Loblolly and the production versions (for example, the original waterfront home stands on piles and has an independent aluminum scaffold frame, whereas the Builder LivingHome sits on the ground and has a steel moment frame), the plan layout and design rationale share similar DNA.

"The idea was to productize the concept in a format that could be marketed in a middle-class price range to a populist market," Kieran says. LivingHomes' long-term pricing goal for the production plans fall in the $150 to $220 per square foot range, although hitting that mark will be contingent on achieving cost efficiencies through volume. *(see page 104)*



Groovy Times
A Groove shower receptor and Purist shower door and low-flow showerhead occupy one side of the master bathroom. The 48-inch-by-36-inch acrylic receptor has a side drain and an aluminum drain cover, while the frameless door has pivoting hinges and CleanCoat glass for easy cleanup. www.us.kohler.com.

Look of Lustra
The team carried the contemporary cabinet look to the bathroom (as well as other areas of the home) with KraftMaid Cabinetry's Venicia line. Part of the Lustra Collection, the Capri has flat-panel, full overlay doors, soft-close drawers, and adjustable hinges. It's seen here in Tygris Gloss. www.kraftmaid.com.



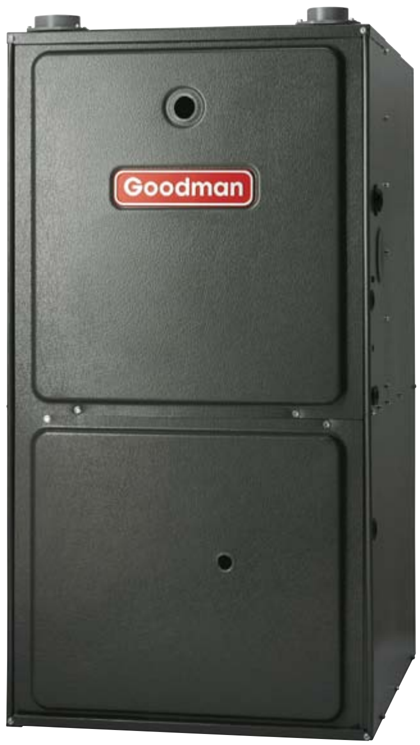


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Environmentally Responsible Indoor Comfort

Lowering the operating costs and enhancing the environmental vitality of a home's central heating and cooling system are the challenges in today's HVAC industry. Goodman provides products and systems that meet these needs in every way.

HVAC Goes Green

The home HVAC system is one of the prime areas where builders can help homebuyers save both money and the environment. A central heating and cooling system can represent up to 35% or more of a home's total energy consumption. Energy-efficiency in these products can have a big impact on annual energy costs.

In addition, the federal Clean Air Act was amended to begin a mandatory phase out of the production and use of many ozone-depleting substances, including R-22, the most commonly used central air conditioner refrigerant. As a result, it will become more expensive to repair and maintain any air conditioning system that relies on R-22. A new blend of refrigerant, R-410A is quickly replacing R-22. R-410A does not contain chlorine so it's identified as being environmentally-friendly. Builders should begin to use—and market—HVAC products that rely on R-410A.

Improved Gas Furnace Efficiency And Clean Air Save Green

A home's gas furnace efficiency is measured by AFUE ratings. The higher the AFUE rating, the less energy is required to keep the home comfortable. Variable speed blowers are available on nearly all gas furnaces that operate at lower speeds reducing the energy required to operate efficiently.

Myriad indoor air quality products are available that not only help cleanse and filter indoor air, but help keep central heating and cooling systems operating at peak efficiency, thereby reducing the cost to heat and cool a home. Mechanical, electronic and HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters all remove particles and pollutants from indoor air. Dust and other particles can accumulate on the working parts of the central heating and cooling system. As the build-up occurs, the efficiency of the system is reduced.

Goodman offers a full line of energy-efficient, environmentally-friendly, HVAC, gas furnace and air quality products that are all reasonably priced, installed by expertly trained technicians and backed by industry leading, product warranties.



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Echo Chamber
Crossville's Echo recycled glass tiles add visual interest to the main bath on the second level. Made from 10 percent to 100 percent recycled glass, each tile has a textured surface that glimmers and reflects light. It was specified in a random blend of frosted Neutral, Blue, and Lite Blue in 1-inch-by-1-inch tiles. www.crossvilleinc.com.



Fresh Air
Broan-NuTone's automatic SmartSense Ventilation System keeps the home's air free of pollutants. The system monitors manual usage of the Ultra Silent fans throughout the house and automatically operates the units when necessary. SmartSense controls digitally communicate with each other over existing power lines. www.nutone.com.



Brick by Brick
Echo recycled glass tiles from Crossville are used in the other baths and in the powder room on the first level. The mesh-mounted tiles are made from recycled glass in various contents depending on color and feature textured surfaces. The powder room backsplash is shown in 1-inch-by-3-inch Frosted Red. It comes in 14 other colors. www.crossvilleinc.com.





Step Up
The contemporary staircase by Milk Design literally takes center stage in the middle of the house. Made largely from recycled-content stainless steel, the 42-inch Damen Railing has a combination flat handrail and round horizontal balusters, while the black, Miami-style stringer supports 2-inch red oak treads. www.milkdesign.net.

Green Envy
Mossy Green DuPont Zodiaq surfacing was used in the master bathroom. Fabricated and installed by Stone Etc., the surface is made from 50 percent pre-consumer recycled glass and is water resistant, durable, and nonporous. It does not require sealing like granite and is low maintenance. www.countertops.dupont.com.





Core Competency
The home's interior doors are not ordinary products. Made by Humabuilt, they feature rapidly renewable wheat board cores that are stable and a high-quality Douglas fir veneer. The door shown here measures 7 feet, 6 inches and has acid-etched glass that allows light but maintains privacy. www.humabuilt.com.

(see page 106)


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Offer Home Fire Sprinkler Systems And Build Bigger Possibilities



Home fire sprinkler systems are now required in over 200 municipalities in the U.S. and the list is growing… rapidly. Communities want to protect residents and save lives. The Rapid Response® System can help you do that while maintaining profitability, minimizing labor costs and differentiating your business.

And thanks to our Rapid Response Contractor Program, we're here to support you with:

- Lists of experienced residential sprinkler contractors
- Research-based marketing materials to educate new home buyers
- Information on "trade ups" that you can use to increase land use and decrease development costs

You'll discover that, for less than the cost of many typical upgrades, you can offer unsurpassed protection and peace of mind to buyers while winning business for yourself.

For more information or to locate a "preferred" installation contractor in your area, visit www.tyco-rapidresponse.com, or call 1-877-438-8926.

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ROOMT OM OVE: Color Design Art specified armless sofas, modular case goods, and an area rug by Carousel that could be easily rearranged to accommodate large gatherings. The coffee table cubes, by Livingreen, are made from recycled Napa Valley wine barrel staves.



MATERIAL MATTERS

Every room in this house is designed to be occupied daily. To illustrate the home's supreme morphing capabilities, the interior designers at Color Design Art (CDA) outfitted common areas with modular furniture pieces, floating seating, and nesting tables that could be configured multiple ways.

"One initial thought we had was to go harder contemporary with the interiors, given the nature of the architecture," says CDA principal Don Anderson, "but that seemed kind of cliché. We wanted it to feel approachable and friendly, not stark and cold. So we went with a lot of warm woods but also clean lines."

And, in keeping with its commitment to healthier homeowners and a healthier planet, the house is appointed, head to toe, in furnishings made from salvaged, recycled, or rapidly renewable content, organic fabrics, and nontoxic paints and stains. Among the wares (most of which were provided by small start-up manufacturers with limited lines): modular coffee tables and case goods made of reclaimed wood from century-old buildings; side tables fashioned out of old railroad ties; a dining room table base comprised of scrap furniture remnants glued together with low-VOC resin; a desk chair made of vintage advertising rulers; a handwoven bamboo floor lamp; and a table and chairs made of recyclable polypropylene. Even the art on the walls is printed on cotton canvas with low-VOC inks, incorporating wood stretcher bars made from reforested trees.

Permanent finishes and fixtures were similarly selected for their sustainable virtues, as well as for time, cost, and transport advantages. A stretched fabric ceiling, for example, proved easier to ship than drywall (no cracking) and was installed on site in a matter of hours. "It has noise attenuating qualities, and you can also use it for walls, which makes it a great material for hiding *(see page 108)*



NICEP LAY: A CDA custom-designed bunk bed/desk combo in the second-floor kid's room was fabricated with formaldehyde-free, FSC-certified plywood. The desk chair, by Viva Terra, is made out of vintage advertising rulers.

mod lines," notes Reed Walker, a project manager for LivingHomes. "It can even be screen-printed."

Equally significant is the home's exterior cladding—an eco-friendly, UV-protected biocomposite of resin, sawdust, and laminate, which comes in 4-foot-by-8-foot siding panels that can be ripped, length-wise, to accommodate varying window sizes. Shipped flat (in sections) and then easily reassembled on the show floor, this panelized skin serves as the top layer of a RainScreen system that allows the house to breathe. Its staggered application not only makes for an interesting geometric pattern, but it also cleverly hides the horizontal mod seams between floors.

"We are getting to the point now where if you don't see the mod lines, you can't necessarily tell that a house is modular," Walker says. And it's getting easier and easier to be green without sacrificing quality or aesthetics.

Is this the wave of housing's future? "I'm not sure," he says. "But it should be."

Fast Times

Two types of sustainable flooring by Weyerhaeuser are installed in the home. Made from fast-growing eucalyptus trees, Lyptus engineered flooring on the first floor has two widths installed, measuring 3 $^{1}/_{4}$ inches wide and 5 inches wide and can be stapled, glued, or floated. The solid-wood flooring on the second floor measures $^{3}/_{4}$ inch thick. www.lyptus.com.



Stretch Out

To help with the acoustic performance inside, the home features a stretch fabric ceiling from Clipso USA. The polyester fabric has a polyurethane coating and is held in place by coated fabric tension profiles. Able to create a seamless span of over 16 feet, the product will not crack or fade over time and has a Class A fire rating. www.clipso.com.



Run for Cover

EcoClad environmentally friendly siding from Klip BioTechnologies covers the house. The product is made from 50 percent bamboo and 50 percent post-consumer recycled paper that are bonded with a water-based resin. It is free of volatile organic compounds and is highly scratch and weather resistant. It's shown here in a wood-grain color. www.kliptech.com.



(see page 110)

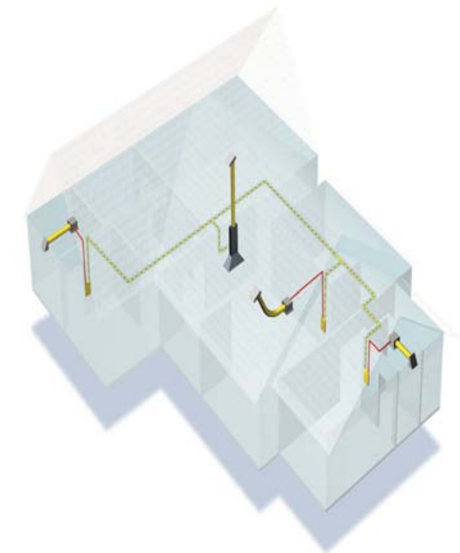


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Builder LivingHome

Walk This Way
A Zulu handwoven rug from Masland Carpets anchors the kid's bedroom and makes a bold statement. Made of wool and silk, the rug comes in a variety of sizes including 10 feet by 14 feet (or custom) and is available in eight colors. www.maslandcarpets.com.



Suck It Up
Keeping the house dust-free will be a breeze thanks to Serenity IQS central vacuum system from Beam. The system includes a centrally located power unit and collection canister and Q PowerTeam hose, handle, electric power brush, and cleaning tools. Quiet and powerful, it offers 640 air watts of cleaning power. www.beam.com.





That's a Wrap
To guard against the destructive forces of air and moisture penetration, the team used Typar Stormwrap, Typar Flashing, and Rain Screen Furring Membrane from Fiberweb Typar. The products act as a complete system to keep out wind-driven rain, bulk water, and air. www.typar.com.



Green Thumb
Plant brokerage company Florasource installed the LiveRoof modular green roof system on the roof. Offering all the benefits of a traditional green roof, LiveRoof was developed by horticulturists to be sustainable and invisible. Modules are delivered to the jobsite with fully mature plants for fast, economical installation and a finished look. www.liveroof.com.



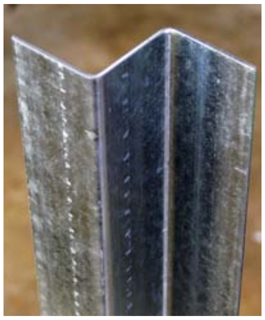
Super Duty
A ROUSH propane kit increases the performance of this Ford F-250 pickup truck. Approximately 30 percent less expensive than gasoline, propane lowers the per-mile operating cost, reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 18 percent, and reduces nitrous oxide emissions by 20 percent. Moreover, propane produces 60 percent less carbon monoxide compared to a gasoline-powered vehicle. www.ford.com.

Fire Fighter
If there's a fire, the Rapid Response sprinkler system from Tyco Fire Suppression & Building Products will activate to put it out. Thorpe Design created the system with 21 sprinkler heads that are linked by a network of BlazeMaster CPVC pipe. Thorpe then concealed the sprinkler heads in a flat-plate that can be painted to match the ceiling. www.tyco-rapidresponse.com.



Hold It
Connectors and hangers from Simpson Strong-Tie support all the structural components. The 1 $^{3}/_{4}$-inch-by-11 $^{7}/_{8}$-inch hangers hold up high-capacity I-joists and common structural composite lumber applications, and the Hd15 hold downs keep the home securely anchored. www.strongtie.com.





Steel Resolve
CEMCO's metal Z-furring strips play an important role in the exterior rainscreen system. The strips are fabricated from cold-formed steel that measures .054 inch thick and features legs that are 1 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches wide. The pieces are then given a hot-dipped galvanized coating for durability. www.cemcosteel.com.



Stuff It
A variety of insulation products from Owens Corning helps create the house's energy-efficient shell. ProPink insulation is blown into the 2x6 exterior walls; the roof of the house and floor of the third bedroom are lined with R-38 kraft-faced fiberglass batts; and the crawl space has R-30. www.owenscorning.com.

(see page 112)

THE STUFF THAT GREEN IS MADE OF

The BUILDER LivingHome could not have been built without the support of its many sponsors and donors, a select group of building products manufacturers and suppliers that contributed to this groundbreaking endeavor. Below is a list of companies, indicating their level of sponsorship and the products they provided.

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Tyco Fire Suppression & Building Products (home fire sprinkler system) www.tyco-rapidresponse .com

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Uponor (water distribution system) www.uponor-usa.com

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Simpson Strong-Tie (joist hangers and hold-downs) www.strongtie.com

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Stone Etc. (tile installation and quartz countertop fabrication) www.stoneetcinc.com

Strini Art Glass (custom light fixture) www.striniartglass.com

Suntech Energy Solutions (photovoltaics) www.suntech-power.com

Thorpe Design (fire sprinkler installation) www.thorpedesign.com

Trex Co. (exterior decking) www.trex.com

Viva Terra (tables, chairs, and bath accessories) www.vivaterra.com

MOD SQUAD



Builder and construction drawings: LivingHomes, Santa Monica, Calif.
Design architect: KieranTimberlake Associates, Philadelphia
Manufacturer: Profile Structures, Santa Fe Springs, Calif.
Interior designer: Color Design Art, Culver City, Calif.
Landscaping: Lifelike Botanicals, Las Vegas

THE TEAM: Steve Glenn, CEO, LivingHomes (above); James Timberlake and Stephen Kieran, partners, KieranTimberlake Associates (left); Don Anderson, principal, Color Design Art (center); Ed Feser, president, Profile Structures (right).

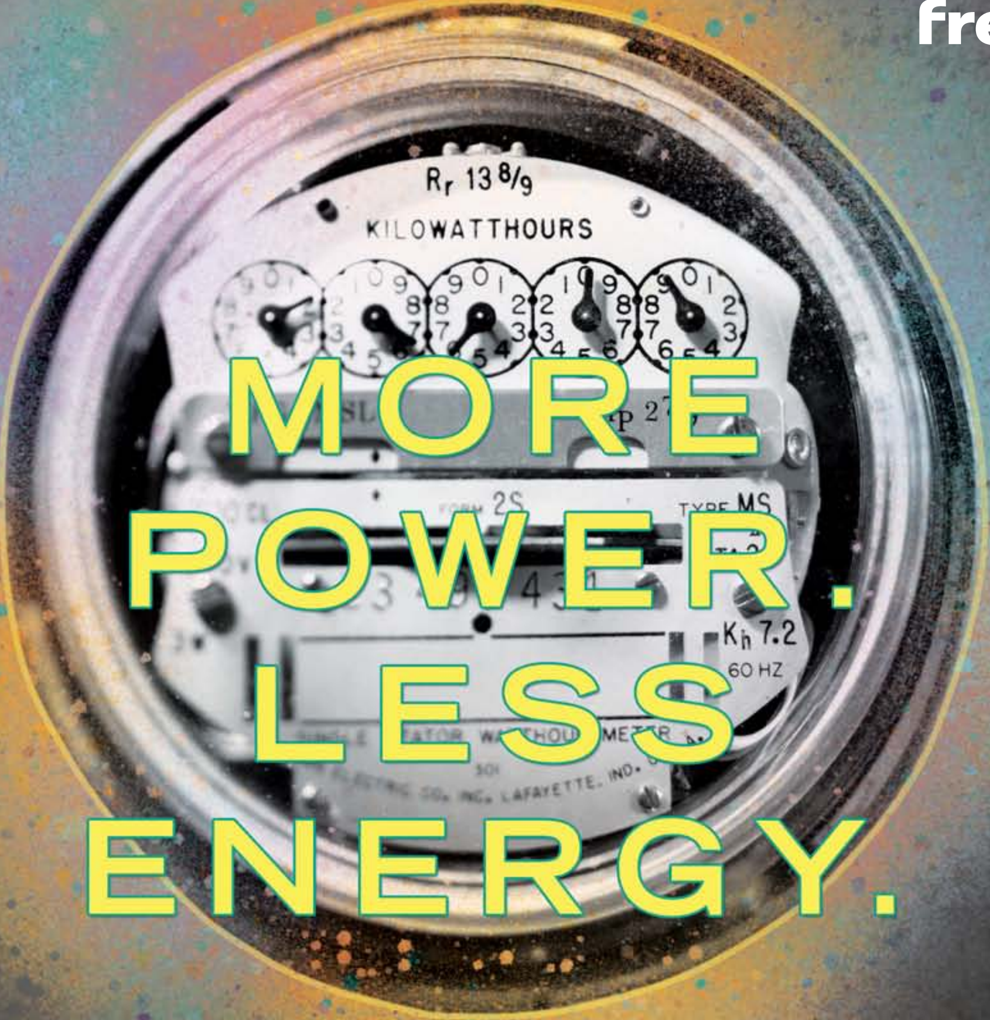






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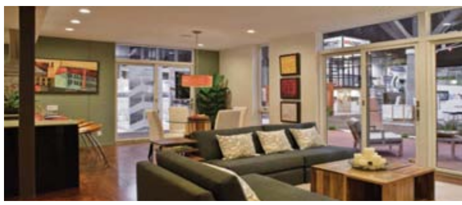
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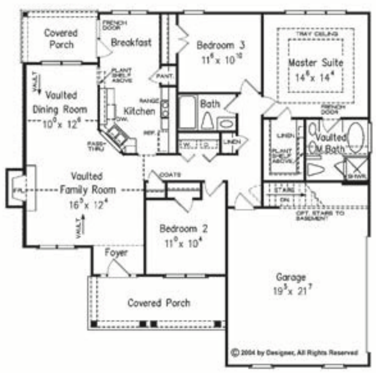
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Square Footage: 1,406 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■ **Dimensions:** 50' - 4" X 49' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace, Slab, Unfinished Walkout Basement



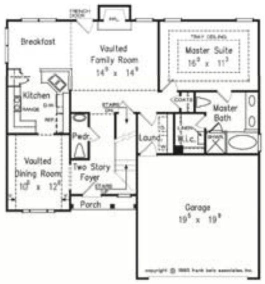
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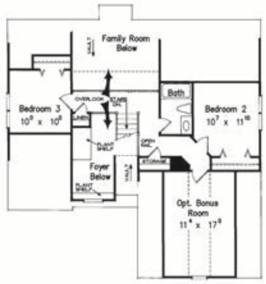


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First Floor: 1,067 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 464 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 1,531 sq. ft. ■ **Bonus Space:** 207 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 41' - 0" X 44' - 4" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace, Slab, Unfinished Walkout Basement



FIRST



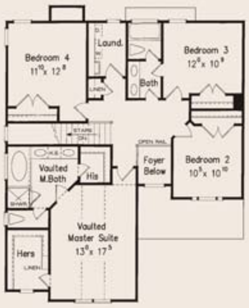
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First Floor: 803 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,182 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 1,985 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 36' - 0" X 43' - 4" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace, Slab, Unfinished Walkout Basement



FIRST



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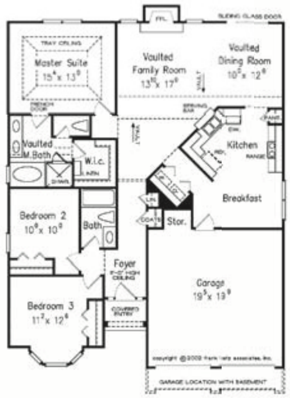


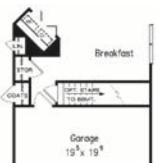
PLAN # HWB1060003 ■ **5-SET** $685 ■ **8-SET** $750 ■ **REPRO** $935 ■ **CAD** $1,570 ■ **PDF** $998



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Square Footage: 1,506 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■ **Dimensions:** 40' - 0" X 52' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace, Slab, Unfinished Walkout Basement





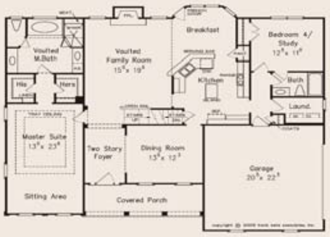
ALTERNATE LAYOUT

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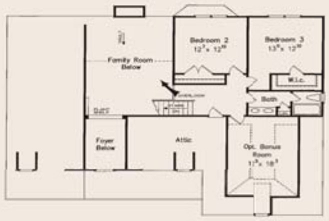
PLAN # HWB1060004 ■ **5-SET** $685 ■ **8-SET** $750 ■ **REPRO** $935 ■ **CAD** $1,570 ■ **PDF** $998

First Floor: 1,805 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 593 sq. ft. Total: 2,398 sq. ft. ■ **Bonus Space:** 255 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 3 ■ **Dimensions:** 55' - 0" X 48' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace, Slab, Unfinished Walkout Basement

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FIRST



SECOND



PLAN # HWBI060005 ■ **5-SET** $845 ■ **8-SET** $910 ■ **REPRO** $1,145 ■ **CAD** $1,915 ■ **PDF** $1,208

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PLAN # HWBI060006 ■ **5-SET** N/A ■ **8-SET** N/A ■ **REPRO** $1,264 ■ **CAD** N/A ■ **PDF** $1,264

First Floor: 1,676 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 851 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,527 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 5 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 55' - 0" X 50' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



FIRST



SECOND

First Floor: 1,799 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 937 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,736 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 3 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 54' - 0" X 57' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace

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FIRST



SECOND



PLAN # HWBI060007 ■ **5-SET** N/A ■ **8-SET** N/A ■ **REPRO** $1,368 ■ **CAD** N/A ■ **PDF** $1,368

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Square Footage: 1,487 ■ **Bonus Space:** None sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■ **Dimensions:** 52' - 6" X 66' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace



PLAN # HWBI060008 ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■ REPRO $875 ■ CAD $1,338 ■ PDF $785

First Floor: 1,676 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 433 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,109 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 3 ■ **Dimensions:** 49' - 4" X 69' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



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PLAN # HWBI060009 ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■ REPRO $1,055 ■ CAD N/A ■ PDF $1,055



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Square Footage: 1,462 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■ **Dimensions:** 42' - 0" X 56' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



PLAN # HWBI060010 ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■ REPRO $875 ■ CAD N/A ■ PDF $875

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First Floor: 1,360 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,145 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,505 sq. ft. ■ **Bonus Space:** 230 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 Dimensions: 30' - 0" X 68' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace



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■ **REPRO** $995 ■ **CAD** $1,795 ■ **PDF** $995

First Floor: 1,190 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,461 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,651 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 40' - 0" X 42' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace



FIRST



SECOND

First Floor: 1,400 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,482 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,882 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 40' - 0" X 61' - 6" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace



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■ **REPRO** $995 ■ **CAD** $1,795 ■ **PDF** $995

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First Floor: 1,320 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,216 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,536 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 30' - 0" X 54' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace



FIRST



SECOND

PLAN # HWB1060014 ■ **5-SET** $750 ■ **8-SET** $795 ■ **REPRO** $995 ■ **CAD** $1,795 ■ **CAD** $995

First Floor: 1,171 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 1,419 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,590 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 40' - 0" X 40' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Crawlspace

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SECOND



PLAN # HWB1060015 ■ **5-SET** $750 ■ **8-SET** $795 ■ **REPRO** $995 ■ **CAD** $1,795 ■ **PDF** $995



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First Floor: 1,821 sq. ft. ■ **Second Floor:** 741 sq. ft. ■ **Total:** 2,562 sq. ft. ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■ **Dimensions:** 53' - 0" X 65' - 0" ■ **Foundation:** Unfinished Walkout Basement



FIRST



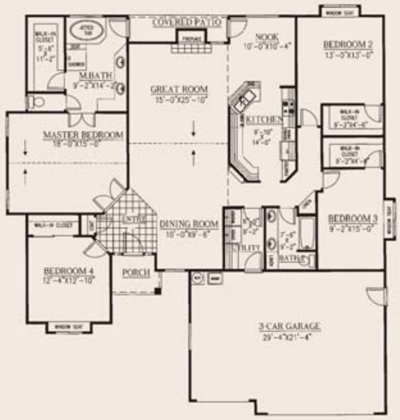
SECOND

PLAN # HWB1060016 ■ **5-SET** N/A ■ **8-SET** N/A ■ **REPRO** $1,000 ■ **CAD** $1,100 ■ **PDF** $1,000

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Square Footage: 2,218 ■ **Bedrooms:** 4 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■
Dimensions: 58' - 10" X 61' - 10" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



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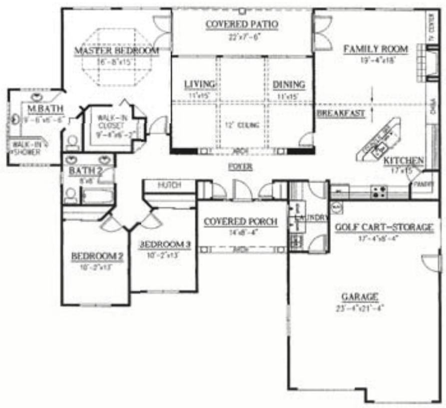
PLAN # **HWB1060017** ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■
REPRO $900 ■ CAD $1,000 ■ PDF $900



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PLAN # **HWB1060018** ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■
REPRO $850 ■ CAD N/A ■ PDF $850

Square Footage: 2,138 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■
Dimensions: 67' - 8" X 62' - 6" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



Square Footage: 2,297 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 1/2 ■
Dimensions: 63' - 6" X 81' - 8" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



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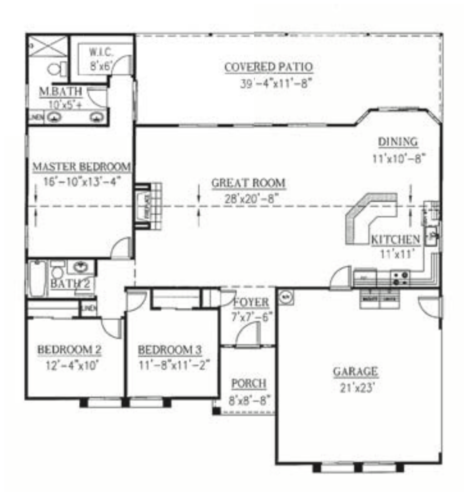
PLAN # **HWB1060019** ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■
REPRO $950 ■ CAD $1,000 ■ PDF $950

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Square Footage: 1,729 ■ **Bedrooms:** 3 ■ **Bathrooms:** 2 ■
Dimensions: 53' - 4" X 56' - 8" ■ **Foundation:** Slab



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PLAN # HWBI060020 ■ 5-SET N/A ■ 8-SET N/A ■
REPRO $800 ■ CAD $900 ■ PDF $800

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HWBI06


Tyvek

People give to charity for many reasons. We give to keep alive the memory of our daughter and sister who died in a tragic accident in 2003 when she was only 20-years-old. We established the Elizabeth Anton Habitat for Humanity Fund four years ago through the Homebuilding Community Foundation (HCF), and many of my friends and colleagues in the housing industry have made generous donations to the fund in her name.

WHY DO WE GIVE *THROUGH* THE HOMEBUILDING COMMUNITY FOUNDATION?

HCF makes it easy, because we can contribute to Elizabeth's fund at any time; in addition, HCF has managed and invested the funds effectively, so, when we identify a Habitat for Humanity project we would like to support, we can make a generous grant. To date we have helped fund the construction of two homes for families in need in suburban Washington, D.C., and homes for some 15 families in war-ravaged southern Lebanon. This year we will continue to support Habitat's rebuilding efforts in Lebanon and contribute to a Habitat project in Pittsburgh, where Elizabeth's grandmother lives.

Placing Elizabeth's name on our donations helps us keep her memory close to our hearts as we help families in need. While donations from Elizabeth's fund are made in her name, the entire homebuilding industry benefits, because the contributions, in a way, symbolize housing industry's support for good causes in communities across the country.

Frank Anton
CEO, *Hanley Wood*

Emily Anton

Margaret Anton

For information on how you can establish a charitable fund to support nonprofit causes important to you and/or to keep the memory alive of one of your loved ones, please visit: homebuilding.org or contact Judy Everett at 713-333-2200 or jeverett@ghcf.org.

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Landscaping, Decking, and Room Enclosures

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Superior Saunas

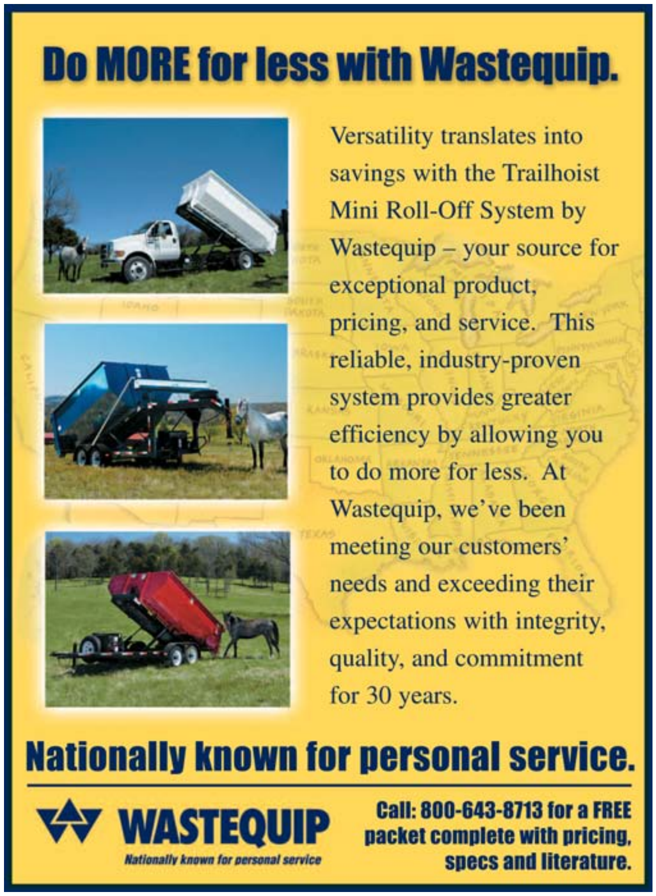
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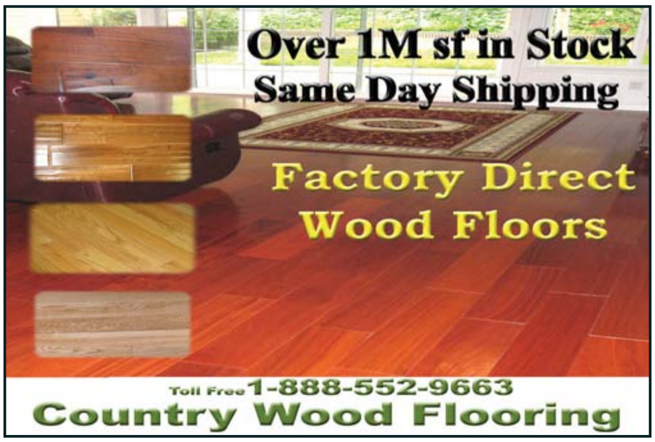
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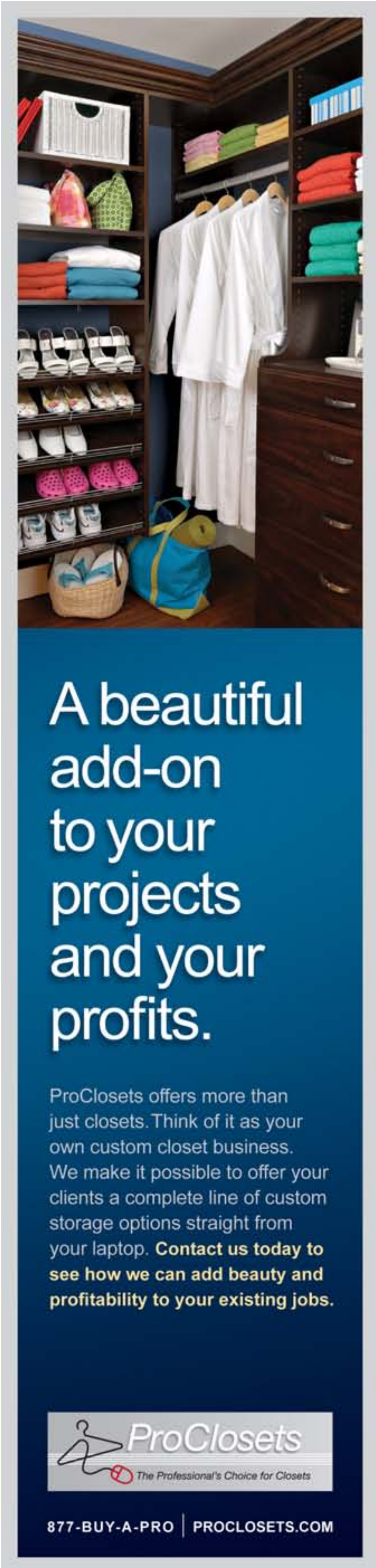

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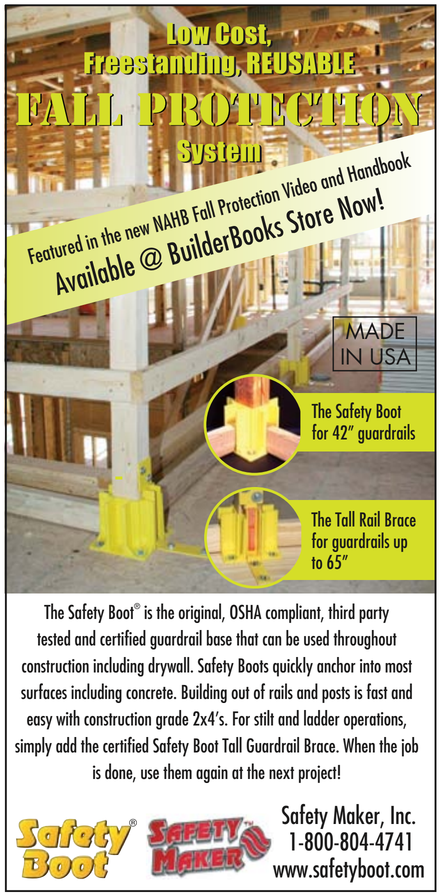


















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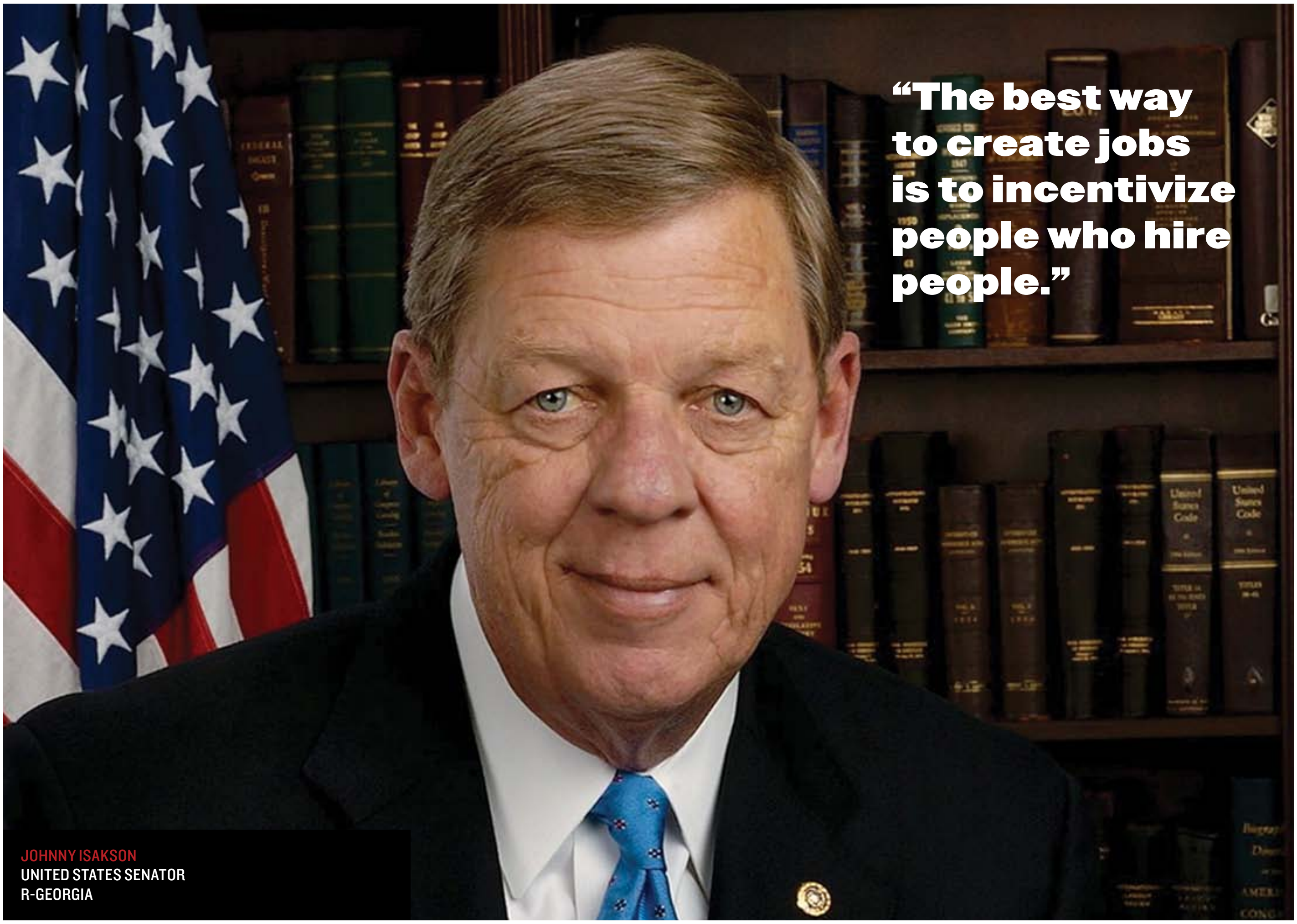
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U.S. Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) has been fighting for a substantive home buyer tax credit for more than a year. Twice now, his proposals have been approved by the Senate, only to be eliminated or diluted in the final versions signed into law. "It's something we absolutely need to address. ... This is talking about using tax policy and the full faith and credit of the United States to get people into the housing market. ... I'm not going to stop trying to get that."

He believes in tax credits to revitalize housing because he's seen it work before. Isakson was managing a real estate brokerage in the Atlanta market in 1974, when a $2,000 tax credit jump-started a severely depressed market. "In one year's time, a three-year supply dissipated," he says. "There's no question the tax credit worked. It will work again."—*Pat Curry*

Q: What do you believe are the most critical steps Congress needs to take to revitalize the economy and put Americans back to work?

A: There's an appropriate role for government to stimulate the economy, and that's with tax policy. ... There are a lot of tax policies that make sense. The best way to create jobs is to incentivize people who hire people. ... Right now, though, given the depths that people are in, I think we also need to look at expanding food stamps and unemployment insurance to stabilize them.

Q: Do you support the reinstatement of seller-funded, down-payment assistance? Why or why not?

A: Down-payment assistance (DPA) is really important in entry-level housing, but we have to be very careful with it. When we passed the housing bill last July, I tried to put a one-year extension on DPA to give us time to write the parameters. Congress didn't see clear to do that. When [Treasury] Secretary [Timothy] Geithner comes forward with his recommendations, hopefully we can reestablish that with the proper controls.

Q: Builder recently asked Nicolas Retsinas, director of Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies, if we need to rethink the concept of homeownership as the American dream. What do you think?

A: If you turn your back on homeownership, you need to recognize what you're doing to the underpinnings of the economy. The current crisis doesn't mean housing is a bad idea. It means shoddy underwriting and loose credit was a bad idea.

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